

DEFENCE OF THE CHURCH of Scotland.

Being some Remarks, by way of Query,
on Three SERMONS.

The First preached and published by Mr. *John Currie* Minister at *Kinglassie*, at the opening of the Synod of *Fife*, 26th September 1732. And the other Two by Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* Minister at *Stirling*; one of them before the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* in *October* 10th, and the other in the Afternoon after celebrating the Sacrament at *Stirling*, in *June* 4th, 1732.

Wherein the sundry Cavils advanced by them against the Management of the Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland*, in planting vacant Churches, &c. are considered and answered, in a LETTER to the said Brethren.

Job xi. 2. Should not a Multitude of Words be answered: And should a Man full of Talk be justified?
Chap. xxxii. 10. Therefore I said, Hearken to me, I also will shew mine Opinion. V. 17. I said, I will answer also my Part, I also will shew mine Opinion; for I am full of Matter, the Spirit with- in me constraineth me.

*Diversum sentire duos de rebus eisdem,
Incolumi licuit semper amicitia.*

EDINBURGH,

Printed by R. Fleming and Company, and sold
at Mr. *James M'Euen's* Shop. 1733.

1607/3514



DEFENCE

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A DEFENCE of the CHURCH of SCOT- LAND, &c.

R. D. B.



Have read your Sermons preach-
ed at the opening of your respec-
tive Synods; in which you give
several good Advices to your Re-
verend Fathers and Brethren,
viz. To show themselves approved unto God
in the Whole of their Behaviour, in Pray-
ing, Studying, Preaching, Managing in Church
Judicatories, and in their ordinary Life and
Conversation. I hope you will not deny, but
that there is a goodly Number of reverend
and worthy Pastors in this Church, eminent
for their Piety and Learning, who make Con-
science of all this, endeavouring to commend
themselves to our dear Lord Jesus Christ, the
Sole King and Head of his Church, and to all

his faithful Followers. We have great Reason to bless the Lord our God, who has thrust out so many faithful Labourers into his Vineyard, and honoured this Church with a Set of Ministers, whose principal Care and Concern it is, to travell in Birth till Christ be formed in the Souls of their People, and to exhort them to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, That as they profess to have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him; and to deal with them plainly and roundly, showing them, That unless they take Care to obey the Commands of Christ, they can pretend no Right to the great Benefits of Redemption, which he has purchased by the dear Price of his own Blood. That they are indispenibly obliged to receive Christ in all his Offices, as their King, Leader, Commander and Ruler, as well as their great High-priest, to make Atonement for their Sins, and reconcile them to God; and tell them, That Christ will be a Saviour and Redeemer to none but these who obey him, as well as believe in, and rely upon him for Salvation. And to teach them also, That who it be their Duty to be zealous in good Works, and to be holy in all Manner of Conversation, yet they are to lay no Stress upon their Holiness and good Works, as the Ground of their Justification before God; but to own, that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable Servants: And to acknowledge, that whatever good Thing is wrought



in them is intirely owing to free Grace, and not to free Will. And seeing this is a Truth which you cannot deny, what Occasion is there for all these rufal Exclamations and Complaints you make against your Brethren? Are they not intirely unfeasonable and out of the Way, as may appear from the following *Queries*?

Query 1. What Service does this to the Christian Religion, to make such terrible Outcries of Defection and Apostacy, Unfaithfulness and Treachery, when there is so little Ground for it, and thereby to sow Discord among Brethren, and foster ill Humours amongst the People? Does not this fill the Mouths of Adversaries with a strong Objection against our holy Religion, as if it was of little Use to curb and restrain Men's unruly Passions, and to subdue their corrupt Nature, even in these who pretend to be most reformed in Principles, and most strict in the Practice of Christian Duties? The Enemies of Christianity in the primitive Times, could say to the Commendation of Christians, *Behold how they love one another.* But alas! in our Times, the Enemies of Christ may say of those who profess to be his Followers, *Behold how they reproach and traduce one another, how they vilify and despise one another, how they bite and devour one another; and especially Ministers, how they judge and condemn one another, and that for different Notions in lesser Matters, that are very remote*

remote from the Vitals of Christianity. Why
 should you raise a Mutiny in the Camp of
Israel, as did those Men of Renown, *Numb.*
xvi. Are there not abundance of Enemies
 without, but we must be Enemies to one ano-
 ther within? Can a House divided against it
 self stand? Does not Satan raise his whole
 Possé of Atheists, Deists, Infidels, Malign-
 ants, Rakes, Debauchees, who all have
 their Horns in the Sides of honest Ministers;
 but you also must shut out your Horns, and
 thrust with Side and Shoulder, and push the
 Feeders of the Flock. Why don't ye preach
 and write in Defence of our common Faith,
 once delivered to the Saints? Have not ma-
 ny of our Brethren in the Southern Part of this
 Island, both of the Church and Dissenters, done
 worthily in this Matter? But our Men of
 Renown must employ their Talents in running
 down their Brethren, and so make the Daugh-
 ters of the *Philistines* to triumph, and the
 Adversaries of the Lord to say, *Aha, we*
would have it thus? Is not this the Doing
 of Satan's Work for him, and advancing the
 Interests of his Kingdom, to raise the Heu
 and Cry against the sincere Lovers of Christ,
 when there is so little Ground for it. But
 seeing the great Occasion of your Complaint
 is, *The Planting of Churches upon a Pre-*
sentation from the Patron, and so robbing
the People of their Right of choosing their
own Ministers,

Query

Query 2. What can Church Judicatories do for helping this Grievance? Don't you know that it is not in their Power to take away any Man's legal Right established by an Act of Parliament? And wherein are Ministers to blame when they do the best they can, and all that lies in their Power for making the best of Bad, and to improve to the best Advantage the Talents and Opportunities that Providence puts in their Hands, tho' they cannot get all Things according to their Wish? Was there not Application made to the Government *Anno 1711.* by the Commission, and ratified by the Assembly 1712, for removing this and other Things grievous to the Church; and because they were not successful, therefore you and others will unreasonably load them with Calumnies, as if they were Betrayers of the Liberties of the Christian People. *Careat successibus opto, quisque per eventus facta notanda putat.*

If you or others think to come better speed, why don't you apply for Redress, (*cuiuslibet licet supplicare*) with all due Submission to the higher Powers. 2dly. Have not the Judicatories of the Church taken all possible Care to have as many of the People to concur with the Patron's Call as could be got? And was there ever a Minister settled, without the Concurrence of some of the Congregation with the Patron's Presentation? 3tio. Is there not a Difference betwixt the Temporality and Spirituality of a Benefice? The First, *viz.* the

the giving a Right to the legal Stipend is, by the present Law, lodged in the Patron. But the Spiritual Part, *viz.* conferring Orders is still intire to the Presbytery; their intrinsic Right to that and other Parts of the Ministerial Function is still in their Hands; so that they may exert it to the Benefit of a greater or lesser Number of People as Opportunity offers. And what is there to hinder a Presbytery to grant the Desire of Twenty or Thirty People seeking a Minister, as well as of Two or Three Hundred? Is it essential to a Minister's Relation to a Flock to have Three or Four Thousand, or Three or Four Hundred, or even Twenty or Thirty under his Care? Don't we read in Church History of Gregory *Thaumaturgus*, that he had but Seventeen Persons in his Diocese or Parish? And did not he perform all Ministerial Duties unto these Few, tho' it is likely, that at the same Time he endeavoured to bring in others to the Christian Faith; and why may not a Minister preach the Word, and dispense the Sacraments to a small Number, as well as to a greater? Are there not in our own Church some Parishes that contain Ten, yea perhaps Twenty Times as many People as some other Parishes, and is not the one as much a Minister as the other, tho' their Numbers of Parishioners are very unequal?

Query 3. As to those who will not join with the Minister ordained, by laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, upon a Presentation

tation from the Patron, with the Concurrence of the Heritors, some of the Elders, and some few others of the Congregation; I know nothing in Law, whether Civil or Ecclesiastick, to hinder them from making use of their natural Right to choose their own Teachers, by calling another Minister with whom they are better pleased, providing they afford a Fund for his Maintenance; which is most reasonable, seeing, as the Apostle says, *None goes a Warfare on his own Charges, and none planteth a Vineyard but eats of the Fruit, or keepeth a Flock without eating of the Milk thereof.* And proves it from the Law, *Thou shalt not muzzle the Mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn.* Either they are able to furnish a Maintenance, or by Reason of their mean and poor Circumstances in the World, are not able. As to the First, They are altogether without Excuse, if they are not willing to exert themselves for the comfortable Subsistence of one to labour among them in the Word and Doctrine. Was not this the Case of a certain Parish, about a Settlement of which a great deal of Noise was made within these two Years, and notwithstanding all the Clamour that was made, there were several Hundreds willing to own the Presentee for their Minister; and suppose there were several Thousands against it, what was to hinder those many Thousands to call another, and provide a Maintenance for him, when a very small Matter from every Family would have

built a Church, and furnished a competent Stipend? It is certain, that our Brethren in *England* and *Ireland* provide all their Ministers this Way, and so did many People in *Scotland* in the Time of King James's Toleration, and so did the Christians for 300 Years. As for these People that would be willing to maintain a Minister, but are not able because of their Poverty; the Answer is plain, That Ministers and Church Judicatories cannot help them, neither Presbytery, Synod, nor even the General Assembly can provide Stipends for Ministers that might be settled in that Manner; and why should poor People lift up their Horn on high, and be so proud, as to exclaim against the faithful Servants of Christ, for not doing a Thing that lies not within the Compass of their Power? Is not this altogether unreasonable? 2dly. Why may not these People either join with the Minister whom divine Providence sends to their Hand, without any Cost or Trouble of theirs, or go to neighbouring Congregations, and join with them? Why should this make so great a Noise? And does not their Behaviour in this look something like murmuring at the wise Providence of God, that has not thought fit to place them in such opulent Circumstances as some of their Neighbours? But, say you, the Souls of the Poor are as precious in the Sight of God as the Souls of the Rich; and our Lord says, *That to the Poor the Gospel is preached*

preached. This is what no Body denies; and no doubt the Church Judicatories would as gladly help the Poor to get the Gospel planted among them in a regular Way, as they would to the Rich; but why should they be reproached for that which is no more in their Power than the removing of Mountains? Can they annul Acts of Parliament? Can they take away a Man's civil Right? Is the legal Maintenance at their Disposal? And it is very probable, that were these poor People Patrons themselves, they would be as tenacious of their Privileges and Birth-right, as any Nobleman or Gentleman in the Land.

Query 4. As to this Remedy proposed, of People's calling and maintaining Ministers for themselves, when they are not pleased to join with the Presentee, what can be objected against it either in Religion or Reason, in Conscience or Law? *1mo.* Can it be displeasing to our Governors either in Church or State? *R.* Surely not to the First, It would be Matter of rejoicing to them; for, without all Controversy, there is great Need of many more Hands than can be had, for advancing the Kingdom of Christ against the Kingdom of Satan, whose Power is so great in the World, that he is called the *Prince*, yea the *God* of it. The Sons of *Zerubab* are too strong for the few Hands employed in the Christian Warfare. And as to our civil Rulers, is it to be thought, that they who tolerate those who are of a different Communion from the Church

established by Law, will not allow the same Freedom to those who are the best Friends of the Government both in Church and State? Will they discourage them from using the best Means they can for promoting their Spiritual Welfare?

2d^o. The grand Objection against the Method proposed is, That it would bring a vast deal of Confusion, by breeding Division, Animosity, Heart-burnings, Envy, Variance, Strife, &c. amongst Neighbours and Ministers too. But for Answer, What Ground of Division or Discord can there be in this Case more than when one large Parish is divided into two or more, by making new Erections as has been done of late in sundry Parishes if People would, suitably to their Profession act from Christian Principles, and on Christian Motives? It is always to be noticed, that new Infrant that is settled according to the Plan, is to be tried and ordained by the Presbytery, and to be subject to their Appointments and Censures, as well as he who is settled on a legal Stipend. And why should the People that maintain a Minister on their own Cost, grudge at their Neighbours who enjoy the Benefit of a cheaper Gospel? Is not this a quarrelling and murmuring at divine Providence? Who art thou that speakest against thy Maker? What tho' thy Neighbour be richer than thou, *is thy Eye evil because God's Eye is good?* And why should you look on Ministers with an evil Eye, who have

have no manner of Hand in this? Look and read the Parable, *Matth. xx.* and see how it suits your Case: Those Labourers, who bore the Heat of the Day, and wrought the whole Day, murmured against the Good-man of the House, when he gave them no more than he gave to these who were called at the Eleventh Hour, and so wrought but one Hour. See what he answered to one of them, *Friend, I do thee no Wrong; take that thine is, and go thy Way: Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine Eye evil because I am good? Is it not wholly out of the way to murmur at the Good-man of the House, or against his Servants, who act by his Commission, and do nothing but what he commands them, viz. to distribute unto his Children the Bread of Life, as far as Providence gives them Access? And why keep you any Grudge at your Neighbours, who do nothing in this Matter, but what both the Law of the Gospel, and the Law of the Land allows them, viz. to take the Benefit of a Gospel Ministry, when Providence is so favourable to them. 2do. As little Ground there is of Division and Animosity betwixt the two Ministers, the one enjoying a legal Stipend, the other depending on the People's Benevolence, if they be of a Christian Temper, (as Ministers above all Men ought to be) they will be so far from envying and maligning one another, that they'll do what they can to strengthen one another's Hands against their common*

common Enemies, viz. Satan, and the Lusts of Men, concurring jointly in the Lord's Work as their respective Circumstances will allow. For 1. Why should he who enjoys the legal Stipend envy or grudge at his Brother, who perhaps has a greater Following, and more numerous Auditory? Should he not rejoice, (as the Apostle Paul did) *That Christ is preached, and People edified*, Philip. i. 18. Should he not pray for the Success of his Brother's Ministry as well as for his own? Yea, tho' his Brother should increase and himself decrease, should he not rejoice *that Christ is exalted*, as John the Baptist did, John iii. 30. Again, why should the Minister that has nothing but his People's Benevolence and Generosity to depend on, grudge at his Brother who has a legal Title to his Stipend? Ought he not to be content with such Things as he hath? Was it not his own Choice? Did he not take his Venture of the Maintenance that was promised him by the People, who called him to be their Minister? And why should he not, by his Diligence in his ministerial Labours, and by a meek and pious Deportment, recommend himself to the good Graces of his Flock? Is it to be supposed; that a zealous Christian People will call a Man to be their Minister, and yet let him starve; will they bind up his Head to a toom Heck? Will they oblige him to serve at the Altar, and not make him live by the Altar? Will they not make Conscience of paying him what

what they promised? Will they not take care to furnish him with Food, Raiment and Fuel? And will they grudge to give him a Horse to ride on, when he has Occasion to travel in the Service of their Souls, or to wait on the Meetings and Judicatories of the Church? They afford comfortable Subsistence to their Herds and Hinds, and other Servants, and will they not afford a Living to their spiritual Guides?

Query 5. Don't you know, that the Protestant Religion, and Presbyterian Church Government subsisted much longer under Patronages, than ever it has been without them, and under much harder Circumstances than we are in at this Time? And were there not many eminent and shining Lights of this Church settled by a Presentation, as may appear by some of these Presentations yet extant, and sundry of these Worthies suffered the Loss of their Benefices, because they would not comply with Prelacy, *Anno 1660*, and *1661*. Is not the Law more favourable now, when no Patron can present any Candidate but who is of the Communion of this Church, and sound qualified by the Presbytery, by undergoing all the ordinary Steps of Trial? And do not the Church Judicatories try and examine every Presentee or Infant, both as to his Principles and Practice, and his good Affection to the Government both in Church and State, and take him solemnly engaged not to do any Thing, directly or indirectly, for subverting

verting our present happy Establishment; and if they find him not qualified, they may reject him. But if after due Inquiry made, they find him qualified for being a Minister of Christ, why should the People who call him, in Concurrence with the Presentation, be deprived of the Benefit of his Labours, when those who are not pleased to own him for their Minister have Access to provide themselves otherwise, if they think fit to lay out themselves for that purpose; and if they will not, whom have they to blame? Surely not the Church Judicatories, who, as spiritual Fathers, do the best they can to provide Food for all their Children. How groundless then are the Outcries of many, as if all were going to Wreck? Don't you know what sort of People they were in our neighbour Nation, who upon certain Occasions raised Mobs, bawling out terribly, That the Church was in danger? And why then is it with such Confidence asserted and complained of, That People are robbed of their natural or spiritual Right of electing their Pastors?

Query 6. What shall a Presbytery do when a Presentation is given in Favour of a sufficient Candidate, and a considerable Part of the Parish concurring with it, tho' perhaps a greater Part of the People stand out against it? Shall they suffer that Parish still to ly vacant, and have no Minister at all to preach the Word, dispense the Sacraments, visit the Sick, and take notice of Scandals? Shall they

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wait

wait seven Years, or perhaps twice Seven, or longer? How many People are all that Time like Sheep without a Shepherd? What a Trouble is it to People to wander about for Baptism to their Children? How many People die in that Time without any Minister to instruct, exhort, or comfort them under their Affliction? Or will any say, That delaying the Settlement will cause the Patron to relent and pass from his Right, to gratify the Humours of People, who have nothing in Reason to object against the Presentee; or that the Patron will abandon the Person whom he has taken by the Hand, and for whom he professes a Respect and Esteem; or do they hope that Providence will interpose, and ease them of the Man they are not pleased with, by taking him out of the Way? If any are so weak as to entertain such Fancies, let them enjoy their Opinion; but let them not impose or rail publicly upon other Brethren, who have strong Reason to be of another way of thinking, and perhaps may see further than they, and who have the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church as much at Heart, as they who make the loudest Complaints. It is not impossible that a Patron may alter his Mind, but how long shall a Presbytery wait to try the Experiment; and shall Parishes want the Benefit of a Gospel Ministry all that Time, possibly till the most Part of them be in their Graves? And what terrible Inconveniencies may follow upon this, is ob-

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sious for every one to see. Will any kindly natural Parent suffer a good part of his Children to starve, and are willing to take what Food and Entertainment he can afford them, to please the unreasonable Humour of another Set of his Children that are more squeamish, and are not content with the wholesome Food that he can give them? Would not that Parent say to such delicate Children, If you be not content with the Viſuals that I can afford you, I cannot help it, you must do your best to provide your selves another way, for it lies not in my Power to procure you more delicious Fare; my Circumstances are not so opulent as to make you feed delicately every Day, and clothe you with Scarlet and fine Linnen: But I must not suffer my other Children to starve, who are not so proud and conceit as you.

Query 7. What Method would you propose for planting of Churches, since you inveigh so much against Presentations? Why don't you propose some rational Scheme that might satisfy your Brethren and the World, which is astonished at your Behaviour? Would you have Presbyteries to ordain young Men in Parishes, without a legal Title to their Stipends? Will they get any legal Diligence against those who are liable without a Patron's Presentation? Will any wise Man take his Hazard of such a Settlement? Or would you rather let all the Churches want Ministers, and let the People be like Sheep without

without a Shepherd scattered on the Mountains, and so become an easy Prey to Wolves and Foxes, or any other wild Beasts that could catch them, and tear them in pieces? What a rare Figure would the Church of Scotland have made by this Time, if all the Kirks had been unplanted these 22 Years, since Patronages were revived by Act of Parliament? What would Friends have said to this, and what would Enemies have said? What a wide Gap would have been made in the Walls of our *Jerusalem*, for the Enemy to come in like a Flood? And what an open easy Entry would have been for the wild Boars to come in, and ravage the Lord's Vineyard at their pleasure? And what a wide Door would have been opened, for overturning our happy Establishment? How would Atheism, Infidelity, Popery, Enthusiasm, Profaneness, and all manner of Wickedness have increased? What Scandals would have abounded in Parishes, when there would have been none to take any Notice of them? How would Religion have been banished into Corners?

Query 8. Have not the Patrons some Shadow at least of Reason, to claim their Right of Presenting? Witness that old Brocard,

Patronum faciunt Dos, Edificatio, Fundus.

Put the Case, That any person of a considerable Estate should, in some remote Cor-

ner of his Lands, (as in our western or northern Islands) fettle a Number of People, as many as might make up a Congregation, and should tell them, I know, my Friends, that you want a Minister, and are not able to provide or maintain one for your selves; you are at a great Distance from the Parish Kirk, the Way is long and bad, and there are some dangerous Ferries to cross from one Island to another; so that you cannot conveniently go thither to wait on Ordinances, and the Minister cannot come to you so oft as need were, to visit your Sick, baptize your Children, prepare you for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I am content to build a Church and a Manse for the Minister, lay out Ground for a Glebe, and provide a competent Stipend, so that you may have easy Access to partake of all Gospel Ordinances. Only let me have the Nomination of the Man that shall be your Pastor, and he shall be one of your own Perswasion, of sufficient Abilities for Piety, Prudence, and Learning, tried, examined, found qualified, and ordained by your own Presbytery, and without Exception as to his Life or Doctrine. If that People, instead of thanking him for his Care and Concern for their Souls Welfare, should reply, Indeed Sir, we will rather want a Minister, and take our Hazard of being like Sheep without a Shepherd, like a Ship without a Pilot, an Army without a General, than have one of your choosing, for as great a Friend as you profess to

to be to our Souls. What would the Christian World say of such a People, but that they little deserved the Name of *Christian*, and that they shewed but very little Respect to Christ and his Institutions, that would chuse rather to want the Benefit of Gospel Ordinances, than be pleased with such a one against whom no Objection is made, either as to his Doctrine, Life, or ministerial Qualifications? 'Tis true, that few of our Patrons can plead so much for their Right; but certain it is, that some have been great Benefactors to the Church. *Constantine the Great* gave great Lands and Revenues to Church-men; which gave Occasion for that Report, That a Voice was heard, saying, *Hodie venenum infusum est in Ecclesiam, Now is Poison poured into the Church.* At our Reformation from Popery, all the Church Lands and Revenues were vested in the King, who gave a great part of them back to certain Noblemen and Gentlemen, with the Right of Patronage to them and their Successors; and now that Right being renewed by an Act of Parliament, none can take it away but the same Authority that enacted it. It were to be wished, that Patrons would not make use of their absolute Right in presenting Ministers, without consulting the Inclinations of the People, and also taking the Advice of the Presbytery. But seeing their Power is so bound, that they can present none but these of our Communion, and liable to be tried by the

the Church Judicatories, who have it in their Hands to admit or reject them, as they find them worthy or unworthy, I am of the Opinion, that neither Ministers nor People need make such Noise about it, as if all were going to wreck, and as if our Constitution were quite overturned, or that we had receded from the Sentiments of our Predecessors. I am not indeed of the Opinion of the Composers of our first Book of *Discipline*, who say *Chap. 4. § 2. That if the Man's Doctrine be found wholesome, and able to instruct the Simple; and if the Church justly can reprehend nothing in his Life, Doctrine, or Utterance, then we judge the Church, which before was destitute, unreasonable, if they refuse him whom the Church did offer; and that they should be compelled by the Censure of the Council and Church, to receive the Person approved and appointed by the Judgment of the Godly and Learned, &c.* I am not of the Mind that any Person should be compelled in Matters of Religion, either by Civil or Ecclesiastical Censures. Religion is a voluntary Thing, and must not be forced; Conscience is not to be judged by any, but him who is the sole Lord of Conscience. People are to be dealt with in a way of calm Reasoning; and if this does not prevail, they are to be left to him who makes a willing People in the Day of his Power. As we use to say, *Those who go to the King against their Will say few good Prayers.*

compelled

their *compelled Prayers do no Good; Nitimur in
 finitum, &c.* The only proper Way is to
 Oppose with them from Scripture and Reason; &
 need of this does not bring them over to our Senti-
 ments, we must rest there. Force indeed
 may compel People to be Hypocrites; but
 will never make them sincere Christians. But
 on the other Hand, I would not have People
 be self-willed and self-conceited, or to
 think themselves wiser than their Teachers,
 and wiser than the Ancients, who have the
 Opportunity of Hearing, Reading, and Know-
 ing much more of Church Affairs than they
 have had. There is one Thing that's vastly
 prejudicial to People's growing in Know-
 ledge, and taking up a right Notion of Things,
 and that is, They are very ready and willing
 to buy and read the Books or Papers that
 are written upon one Side of a Question, but
 will not daign themselves to read and ponder
 what is written on the other Side. This
 serves only to fortify their Prejudices against
 the Truth, and is the Cause of their falling
 into so many Blunders, and speaking so much
 Nonsense, when they are talking and arguing
 in such Matters. What is this but the acting
 the Part of an unjust Judge, who opens his
 ears to the one Party, but shuts them against
 the other. People can never rightly under-
 stand or judge in a Matter of Controversy,
 unless they hear what the reverse Party have
 to say for themselves, as well as those of their
 own Party. It were to be wished, that some
 Brethren

Brethren had not too great a Hand in fomenting this unreasonable, and I may say stubborn and perverse Humour. Remember what the wisest of Men tells us in this Case, Prov. xviii. 17. *He that is first in his own Cause seemeth just; but his Neighbour cometh, and searcheth him.*

Query 9. Why do you alledge, That we are degenerated from our worthy Reformers from Popery and Prelacy, who would not part with a Hoof of Christ's Prerogative, or the Privileges he hath bequeathed to his Church, and particularly in this of the People's Right in choosing their Ministers? I hope there is no faithful Minister in this Church, that would part with any Hoof of divine Truth; but pray tell us, and condescend what Hoof or Hair of Truth is parted with, in the Method now used in settling of Ministers, and planting vacant Churches? Is it so absolutely clear from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, that a Minister ought not to be, without the harmonious Consent of at least the greatest Number of the People inhabiting such or such a District? Is there any certain Determination of what Number of People should be committed to a Minister's Charge and Oversight, whether they should be two Thousand or two Hundred, or but two Dozen? And seeing there is not a Text in all the Bible to determine this, is it not strange, that Men should be so dogmatick and positive in their Assertions? It would seem
there-

therefore, that this is left to the Determination of Christian Prudence, according to the Circumstances of Persons, Times, Places, Churches and Countries. As for the Judgment of our Reformers, they don't seem to have had any settled Opinion about it; their Directions thereanent being so different and various. The first Book of *Discipline* (which was never authorised by any Assembly of this Church) seems to lodge the Right of electing Ministers in the People; the second Book of *Discipline* places it in the Presbyterian Eldership; the Assembly 1642. so far submitted to Patronages, that they direct a List of six Persons, willing to accept of a Presentation, upon every Occasion of a Vacancy, to be sent up with a blank Presentation, to be filled up with one of the List, which shall have most Interest. The Assemblies *Anno* 1645, and 1646. seem both to be in the Dark about it. The Assembly 1649. give a Directory about it, allowing the Right of electing Ministers to the parochial Eldership, or Kirk-session, probably considering them as the Representatives of the Congregation. The Parliament *Anno* 1690. put that Power of Election in the Hands of the Heritors and Elders in Landward Parishes; and as for Burghs, they entrusted it to the Magistrates and Elders, with the Heritors of the Landward part of the Parish: And this Act was concerted with the Advice of many old, wise, and grave Ministers, who had suffered under the late *Presbytery*.

lacy. And now at last, the Assemblies 1731, and 1732, considering it was necessary that Presbyteries should have some fixed Rule for planting vacant Parishes, in case of the Right's being devolved into their Hands, did appoint the Magistrates, Elders, and Heritors in Burghs, and the Heritors and Elders in Country Parishes, to be the Electors of Ministers. And if this Church had determined in this as an Article of Faith, they would not have varied so often in their Directions about it. This you may see more fully discussed in a Pamphlet emitted at the last Assembly, entituled, *A modest Enquiry*, &c. It had been your Wisdom, to have considered and refuted what is there advanced, before you had preached and printed so many Things without Book; that so the World might not have Occasion to say, That your Talent lies more in Scolding, than solid Arguing.

Query 10. Why should you amuse the People of the Country, to raise so much Dust about their Right of choosing their Spiritual Guides, when the People of *Edinburgh*, *Glasgow*, and other populous Towns, have not perhaps, One of a Hundred of them, a Voice in electing of their Ministers, that Power being lodged only in the Town Council, and Elders, and Ministers of the Burgh? And have not many worthy Ministers been settled this way, ever since the Government was established by the Act of Parliament 1690? As for *Edinburgh*, there is not one Heritor, for any

any Thing I know, that hath a Vote in choosing Ministers, unless he be a Member of the Town Council or Kirk Sessions. Are the People in the Country more learned, wise, and better than all the Judges, Advocates, Writers, Physicians, Merchants, Tradesmen, and other Inhabitants of *Edinburgh*, who never have any Vote in electing of Ministers? If this be a Right bequeathed to them by the *Master of the Vineyard*, why should they pass from it more than the People in the Country? If this were an undoubted unalterable Right, would so many wise and good Men pass from it? Why then should Country People be so religious about it? And where is the Ground of Country Elders complaining so much, when by the late Assembly, they are put upon a Level with the Heritors, as to the Power of calling Ministers?

Query 11. Why do you fill People's Heads with the fearful Apprehensions, That our Churches may come in Time to be filled with a Number of insufficient, corrupt, Time-serving Ministers, who may at length contribute to the overturning our whole Constitution? What Ground can you have for this, when Patrons can present none but such as have been tried by some of our Presbyteries, and found qualified for preaching the Gospel, and taking the Charge of some Congregation? And is it not still left to the Presbytery, when a Settlement is proposed, to try the Candidate *de novo*, both as to his Soundness of Doctrine, Fitness

ness to Teach, and as to his Christian Deportment, and to Reject him if he be not found worthy? And if even after Settlement, he shall be found not to answer Expectation, but prove either heretical, scandalous, or negligent, is it not full in their Power to censure him according to his Demerit, and to depose him *simpliciter*, if they find Cause for it? And if a Presbytery be negligent in this, whom have they to blame but themselves? But I hope no Presbytery in this Church shall ever be found so unfaithful to the Trust reposed in them. It may fall out, that after all the Care taken to sift and weigh Men in the Balance of the Sanctuary, some may afterwards be found to be light and wanting: But who can help this, as long as the Church is in this State of Imperfection, where *we see but in Part*, and *prophecy in Part*? Was there not a *Judas* in Christ's own Family? Were there not false Brethren and corrupt Teachers in the most famous Churches planted by *Paul*, and watered by *Apollo*? Can any Man, or any Society of Men answer for future Contingents? What has been may be, notwithstanding all the Vigilance of Watchmen, who can judge no further than according to the outward Appearance. This should excite us all to be the more diligent in Duty, more watchful and circumspect, more jealous of our selves, and more importunate in Prayer, that the Master of the Vineyard may thrust out many faithful Labourers, and bless their Endeavours

deavours with Success, and preserve his Church from erroneous, fraudulent, negligent self-seeking Men; and that there may no Wolves arise among ourselves, who may tear the Flock in Pieces, instead of feeding them; and that he may send forth his Light and his Truth, to guide Church Judicatories, and keep them from giving any wrong Touch to the Ark of God. Can you or any Body else assure Mankind, that every one of those who appear so keenly against some late Settlements are upright hearted Men, and not acted by a Spirit of Pride, Self conceit, or affecting Popularity; and that in an Hour of Temptation, they would not as readily comply as any of these against whom they so loudly exclaim? Has it not been found, that some who have appeared with the greatest Zeal against Presentations, yet when one has been offered to them or their Friend, they have tamely submitted? Have we not all need to be sober minded? *Let him that stands take heed lest he fall.*

Query 12. Why so hard in running down the Act of the last Assembly? What Evil have they done, in directing the Power of electing Ministers to be lodged in the Heritors and Elders of a Congregation? Are not they the fittest Persons? May it not be presumed, that they have the Spirit of discerning who may be a proper Person for helping the People's Faith, and leading them to Christ, and consequently to Heaven? Is there no Difficulty

culty in determining who of the Christian People should vote in choosing a Minister, and who not? If this Privilege belong to them as Christians, then it must belong to every Individual, for *a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*. May not a Wife then plead for this Privilege as well as the Husband? It is true. (says she) I must be subject to my Husband, but it is only in the Lord: Have not I a Soul to be saved as well as he? Must I act by an implicit Faith, and pin my Faith to my Husband's Sleeve? And may not a Son or Daughter, arrived at the Years of Discretion, say, We owe Obedience and Honour to our Parent in all Things lawful? We can never be too thankful to him for the Care he has taken in our Education and Maintenance: But as we have now ratified our Baptismal Covenant, and taken the Vows upon ourselves, we must see to the Means of our spiritual Edification. So may Servants say to their Master. You may easily see what Division and Disturbance this would breed in Families. When the Father is for one Minister, the Mother for another, the Son for a Third, and the Servant for a Fourth. If you say, it belongs only to Heads of Families to vote in the Choice of a Pastor, then the Question is, Who are to be reckoned Heads of Families, when one Man may have Six or Seven, yea a Dozen of Servants, who all have Families of their own? Was it not expedient then, that Presbyteries should have some Rule by which they

they might be directed in this Matter, and
 if you are not satisfied with the Rule propo-
 sed, why don't you propose one that may be
 liable to no or fewer Difficulties? *Carpere*
vel noli nostro vel ede tua. Will you say,
 That Servants, who may be changed every
 Half Year, have as great an Interest in elect-
 ing the Minister of a Parish as those who
 have a fixed Residence in it, either as Heri-
 tors, by reason of their Lands, or Tenants, by
 their long Tacks? Again, can it be said,
 That those Tenants and Cottars, who have
 Tacks but from Year to Year, as in many
 Places of the Country both in the West and
 North, have as great an Interest as their
 Landlords, whose Interest is fixed? It is cer-
 tain, that the Rule above mentioned was ob-
 served in this Church, from the Year 1690 to
 1712, and the greatest Question that some-
 times occasioned Debate was, Whether Feu-
 ders were to be reckoned Heritors or not? Why
 then should there be so much Outcrying a-
 gainst it now, considering, that even according
 to the Plan of allowing all the Heads of Fami-
 lies a Vote, not a third Part of the Christian
 People, consisting of Men, Women, Children,
 and Servants, would have a Voice in choosing
 their Minister? By Children I mean such
 only who have arrived at the Years of Dis-
 cretion. Further, is there not also a Diffi-
 culty as to the admitting the Ignorant and
 the Scandalous to vote? When all these
 Things are laid together and considered, it
 will

will be found, that the Assembly's Scheme is as reasonable as any that can be proposed; and therefore, these who have a due Regard to the Peace of our *Jerusalem*, will be very loath to make it a Bone of Contention. As for the Objection about Non residing Heritors, it is, in my Opinion, satisfyingly answered in the above mentioned *Modest and humble Enquiry, concerning the Right and Power of electing and calling Ministers, &c.* which you may refute if you can.

Query 13. Why may not a People be edified by a Minister's Sermons, whether he came in by a Presentation from the Patron, or a Call from the Heritors and Elders, or the Body of the People? Of how little Importance is it to the Bulk of the People, or to any of them, if a good Man be set over them, whoever were the Instruments of his Settlement? If one has the Opportunity of hearing a good Sermon, either in his own, or neighbouring Congregation, at the Celebration of the Sacrament, or in some remoter Part of the Country, why may not we be edified by the Sermon, *viz.* by being confirmed in the Belief of some divine Truths, excited to the Performance of some Christian Duty, convinced of the Evil and Danger of some Sin or Vice to which he has too great an Inclination, it may be Pride, Malice, Envy, rage, Anger, sudden Passion, Contention, Murmuring, Discontent, Covetousness, Selfishness, Worldliness, fraudulent Dealing, Uncharitableness.

tableness, Intemperance in Eating or Drink-
 ing. Why may not he be awakened by the
 Thundrings of the Law, or comforted by
 the Promises of the Gospel, tho' he do not
 enquire by whom he was called to that Pa-
 rish, and tho' he came not in by the Method
 that some would be at? And why may not
 he be excited to study a holy Walk and Chri-
 stian Deportment, by the same Minister's pri-
 vate Visitations and Exhortations, when he
 beholds his good Conversation in Christ? But
 when Prejudice stands at the Door, it shuts
 all the Windows of the Soul against the Light,
 which would shine in to them. Would
 People consider Things wisely and calmly,
 they would submit to the Providence of God,
 and cheerfully concur in owning such Mini-
 sters, when there is no tolerable Exception
 against them, but who are willing to do all
 that lies in their Power for the Welfare of
 their Souls, and who make it their Study to
 take heed to themselves and to their Doc-
 trine, that by so doing, they may save them-
 selves and them that hear them. And I am
 sure, this is the Design of every honest Gos-
 pel Minister. Is People's having a Vote in
 calling a Minister essential to their Salvati-
 on, or spiritual Edification? What wise Man
 ever said or thought such a Thing?

Query 14. What Profit is there in such
 idle Debates? Don't they divert People's
 Minds from thinking on Subjects infinitely
 more worthy of their Consideration, *viz.* The
 E Majesty

Majesty of God, his adorable and amiable
 Perfections, his glorious and wonderful
 Works of Creation and Providence, and espe-
 cially the mysterious Work of Redemption,
 his unparalleled Love, in giving and sending
 his only begotten Son to save us from our
 Sins, and that Wrath and everlasting Destruc-
 tion we are liable to for Sin; the Glory of
 Christ, his Fulness, the unsearchable Riches
 of his Grace manifested in his humbling
 himself to the bitter, shameful, and accursed
 Death of the Cross, that we might *die unto*
Sin, and live unto Righteousness; his Exal-
 tation, Resurrection, Ascension, sitting down
 at the Father's right Hand, and making con-
 tinual Intercession for us; His coming again
 to judge the World at the last Day, to render
 unto every one according to his Works; the
 glorious Reward to be given to all the sincere
 Followers of the Lamb, and the terrible Pun-
 ishment to be inflicted on all these who de-
 spise, reproach and disobey him, who will not
 come to him that they may get Life: Are
 not these Subjects of vastly greater Import-
 ance, both for Ministers to preach, and People
 to hear and think on? What Reward can
 Ministers expect from the Bishop of our Souls,
 and chief Shepherd of the Flock, for feeding
 the Sheep of his Pasture with Chaff instead
 of Corn? What is the Chaff to the Wheat?
 How will they answer such Challenges from
 the Master of the Vineyard? Why did you
 amuse my poor People with idle Debates,
 and

and groundless Scruples, when you should have done your utmost to pull them out of the Snare of the Devil, and out of the Jaws of the bottomless Pit? Had you not many under your Inspection perishing, some through lack of Knowledge, some through Want of Faith, some by Worldly-mindedness, some by Sensuality, others by trusting to lying Words that could not profit them, thinking they were something, and yet were nothing; some that were Slaves to their Lusts, &c. why did you not teach them to bridle their Appetites, to subdue and rectify their irregular Passions? Why did you not strengthen the Diseased, heal the Sick, bind up that which was broken, bring again that which was driven away, and seek that which was lost? *Ezek. xxxiv. 4.* Did not this fill your Hands with sufficient Work? May not they expect to meet with the Reproof he gave to *Martha*, *Thou art troubled about many Things, but one Thing is needful?* What Madness is it when a House is on Fire, or a Ship like to sink, for the People of the House, or the Ship's Crew, to be jangling one with another, and so hindring and weakening one another's Hands; or like the Builders of *Babel*, through the Confusion of Tongues, not capable to carry on the Work?

Query 15. Why such Clamour and Noise against your Brethren, as if they were not Gospel Preachers, but meer Legalists or Moralists? Do not all the Ministers of *Scotland*

*preach Christ crucified, tho' he be to the
 Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks
 Foolishness? Do they not preach and press
 People to accept a whole Christ, i. e. in all
 his Offices? Are they to insist only in telling
 People the Benefits they have from Christ
 and not push them on to perform the Duties
 incumbent on all that profess to be Christ's
 Disciples, shewing them, That these Duties
 extend to the whole of their Behaviour to-
 ward God and Man, and their own selves
 Tit. ii. 11, 12. Mic. vi. 6. Are we not
 bound by the Acts of our Assemblies, both
 in former and later Times, to preach through-
 out the whole Catechism? And is not a great
 Part of the Catechisms taken up on the Com-
 mandments, the Duties required, and the Sin
 forbidden in each Precept? And is it not
 Ministers Duty to explain all these, and ex-
 hort accordingly? How can they be answer-
 able to God, in soothing People in an Opin-
 ion of their accepting Christ, and being verily
 perswaded that Christ died for them in parti-
 cular, and yet not obeying Christ? Will he
 be a Saviour to any but those who obey him
 as well as believe in him? Must they not
 tell their Hearers, That the Wrath of God
 will be revealed from Heaven against all
 Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men
 who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness; And
 that Christ himself will be revealed from
 Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming
 Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know
 not*

not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power: When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, &c. And must Ministers, who frequently put People in Mind of these Things, be reckoned legal Preachers? Do any Ministers in Scotland teach People to expect Justification by their own Works and Obedience, or do they bid them do these Things in their own Strength? Do not they tell them, That in order to their running the Christian Race, they must look unto Jesus, as the Author and Finisher of Faith, and as the Fountain of that Strength, that's necessary to enable them to fight out the good Fight of Faith, and that it is in the Lord we must have both Righteousness and Strength? If there be any Minister that teaches or preaches otherwise, why don't you name him that he may be known, prosecuted, and censured according to his Demerit? Is there any Presbytery or Synod in Scotland, that will not censure Ministers that are guilty this way? Why then should any be so malicious and ill-natur'd, as to reproach the Innocent? To tell People at solemn Occasions, we hear, or we fear such a Thing; what does this serve for, but to fill their Heads with Jealousies, and groundless Prejudices against their Ministers? Is not this a weakning the Hands of your Brethren, and doing the best Service you can to the

the old *Accuser* of the Brethren? Like unto this is another Complaint frequently advanced against some hopeful young Preachers and Ministers, *viz.* That they have got into a new way of Preaching, after the Manner of Moral Harangues; so that one that hears them cannot well know, but they have studied *Cicero* and *Seneca* more than the holy Scriptures. If there be any such, why don't you condescend on the particular Persons, that they may be called to an Account and censured? But now as to these Heathen Moralists, are there not many Things in them worthy of our Observation, yea Imitation? For Example that of *Seneca*, when he tells us, it was his Custom every Night to examine himself, *What Good have I done this Day, what Vice have I conquered, what Passion restrained?* &c. And why may not a Minister cite them upon some Occasions, to confirm their Doctrine from the Light of Nature, and to tell them, as Christ told his Hearers, *That the Queen of the South, and the Men of Nineveh, will rise up in Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it.* For if they who had nothing but the Light of Nature to guide them, came such a Length in the Practice of Moral Virtues, such as *Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, Patience, &c.* what shall become of Christians, who have both the Light of Nature, and the Light of divine Revelation to direct them, and yet come far short of many Pagans in Love to their Brethren,

children, subduing their Passions, restraining their carnal Inclinations, &c. And why may not they follow the Example of the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, who so often cited the Pagan Authors to confirm the Truths that he taught, and to shame People the more out of their Folly; as *Acts* xvii. 28. he cites one of the *Greek Poets*, *Aratus*, *For we are all of his Offspring*, Τὸ δὲ ὅλον γένος ἐκ αὐτοῦ ἐστί. See also *1 Cor.* xv. 33. *Be not deceived, evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* And *Tit.* i. 12. Where he cites another of their Poets, *Epimenides*, to prove the common Character of the People of *Crete*, and to put *Titus* on his Guard, as to those who might be ordained Elders amongst these of them that profess'd Christianity, *The Cretians are always Liars, evil Beasts, slow Bellies,*

Κῆρες, αἰὲν ψεῦσαι, καὶ ὄρεα θηρία, ἠνέρες ἀργαί.

Why may not a Minister cite a Passage from *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Marcus Antoninus*, &c. to prove a Point of Morality; what Danger can there be in it, and why exclaim against young Ministers or Probationers? What good Service does this, but to give People a bad Impression of the Church of *Scotland*, and to scandalize them against promising young Men? If you know any that run to Excess in citing Pagan Authors, why don't you tell them their Fault, and give them your best Advice; and if they will not hearken to you,

you, why don't you tell the Church of them? This is the Method prescribed by our blessed Redeemer, in order to the removing of Offences: And were this Method more conscientiously followed, there would be far less Ground of Offence amongst us. It were to be wished, there were none of us to whom that satyrical Censure of one of the Ancients against many of the Pagan Philosophers, were not too applicable, *Dum loquuntur nihil gloriosius, dum vivunt nihil vilius*, While they speak there is nothing more glorious, but as to their Lives there is nothing more contemptible. And why should Ministers be reproached for preaching up Morality? Can there be any true Religion without Morality? Was not this the Design of our Lord's being manifested in the Flesh, and suffering for us, that he might restore true Morality? Did not the Just suffer for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God, that is, that he might restore us to the Favour of God, the Image of God, and Communion with God? Is not Love to God and our Neighbour the Sum of the Moral Law? And is not a third Part at least of our Catechisms, taken up in explaining and recommending Moral Duties, and cautioning us against the contrary Sins? Are we not to shew our Faith by our Works? And does not the Apostle James insist largely on this, in the 2d Chapter of his *Epistle*, telling us, *That as the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*. Shall

Shall we give Ground to the Papists and others to call us *Solifidians*, as they unjustly reproached the Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith? Shall we be at so much Pains to caution People against *Legalism* on the one Hand, and shall we not be as careful to guard them against *Antinomianism* on the other? We ought to beware of running to Extremes on either Hand. He is certainly a foolish Builder that builds a House without a good Foundation; but if a Man employ all his Time, and lay out all his Stock in laying a Foundation, without ever laying one Stone above another to make a Superstructure, may not he be reckoned a Builder no less foolish? A House without a Foundation is a meer Chimera, and a Foundation without a House upon it, is a Jest to the World. But the spiritual Building is so adjusted, that the Superstructure cannot be without the Foundation, nor the Foundation without the Superstructure. For if any Man be in Christ he is a new Creature, and it becomes Ministers of the Gospel (who are Builders under Christ) to inculcate on their People the Necessity both of the one and the other. If there be great Hazard on the one Hand, of People's trusting to their Duties, Obedience, and good Works, as the Ground of their Justification before God; so there is no less Hazard in their trusting to a dead Faith. They that do so are like those who tread on rotten Grains, or walk on rotten Ice, or go to Sea in a leaky Vessel.

A dead Faith will no more carry them to Heaven, than (as one expresse it) a dead Horse will carry them from one Town to another. 'Tis certain, that *without Faith it is impossible to please God*; and it is as certain, that *without Holiness none shall see the Lord. What God has joined together let no Man put asunder*. Why then should not Ministers be free with People in telling them their Duty, and warn them against all manner of Sin, not in general only, but by declaiming against, and shewing the Evil of the particular Sins they may know them to be too much addicted to, such as Pride, Malice, Revenge, Dishonesty, Drunkenness, Tipling, Backbiting, Wantonness, Lasciviousness, and the like; for the sake of which, the Wrath of God comes on the Children of Disobedience. Shall we fear to offend them? Shall we clap their Heads, and flatter them in their evil Ways, as the false Prophets did? *Jer. xxiii. 16. Thus saith the Lord, hearken not unto the Words of the Prophets that prophesie unto you; they make you vain; they speak a Vision of their own Heart, and not out of the Mouth of the Lord. V. 17. They say unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said ye shall have Peace, — No Evil shall come upon you, &c. to Verse 32.* These false Prophets made the poor People believe there was no Hazard nor Harm in the Way they were following, and the People loved to be so flattered and fortified in their evil Courses:

Courses : But the true and faithful Prophets, who had God's Commission, took a quite contrary Method ; they lifted up their Voice like a Trumpet, they cried aloud, and did not spare to shew the People their Transgressions, and the House of *Jacob* their Sins. They knew that the Lord made them *a fenced City, and an Iron Pillar, and Brazen Walls*, and so did not spare to tell the Kings and Princes and Priests their Faults, as well as the meanest of the People. *Isa. lviii. 1. Jer. xvii. — 19.* They told them plainly and roundly, That unless they amended their Ways, and put away the Evil of their Doings, there was no Mercy for them, no escaping the deserved and threatned Destruction that was coming on them. Did not the Lord command these Prophets to speak his Word faithfully, and not the Dreams of their own Hearts ? We must certainly follow the Example of these true Prophets, or we cannot expect a Prophet's Reward. Let us not stand then to tell the People their Duties, as well as their Privileges ; and we must deal with them faithfully and plainly, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, if we should not desire that their Blood should be required at our Hands. Perhaps there are but too many in our Days much of the Temper of those who lived in the Days of the ancient Prophets, particularly, *Isa. xxx. 9, 10. This is a rebellious People, lying Children, Children that will not bear the Law of the Lord,*

Lord. V. 10 Which say to the Seers, See not; and to the Prophets, Propheſie not unto us right Things; ſpeak unto us ſmooth Things; propheſie Deceits. Ought we not to follow the Apoſtle's Example, of which he puts the Elders of Ephesus in mind, in his Exhortation to them, Acts xx. 27. I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God. We muſt tell People the Neceſſity of Holineſs as well as of Faith, and not gratify the Humours of theſe People, who are well pleaſed to hear of Goſpel Privileges, but are not ſo fond of Goſpel Duties; but call it legal Preaching, when they are exhorted to fear God, and keep his Commandments, which the Royal Preacher calls the Whole of Man, viz. either his whole Duty, or whole Happineſs. If any Miniſters, to gain the Applauſe of People, propheſie to them ſmooth Things, verily they have but a poor Reward for the Riſque they run, of diſpleaſing the Maſter, and putting People in hazard of truſting to lying Words that cannot profit them. There is great need of warning People as Paul does, 2 Cor. v. 17. If any Man be in Chriſt he is a new Creature. This is the true Mark of Faith. And Rom. viii. 9. If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. And how ſhall they know they have the Spirit, but by the Fruits of the Spirit. And what are theſe Fruits? See them mentioned, Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs.

*Meekness, Temperance, against such there is no Law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts. Col. iii. 12, 13. Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering : Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, &c. How rare are these Fruits in our Day ? Faith indeed is much cried up, and frequently preached, which is well done ; but why not the other Fruits of the Spirit also be insisted on, by which the Reality of our Faith may be known, as a Tree is known by its Fruit, especially when we are so fully warned against trusting to a dead Faith ? A certain learned Divine observes, that the Apostle James seems to have written this by way of Prophecy, with respect to these latter Days in which our Lot is fallen, when there are so many Professors of Christianity, who either have no Faith at all, or trust to a meer historical or dogmatick Faith, which is but a dead Faith without Works. As we ought to exhort People to beware of open Profaneness, Wickedness, and Infidelity, which abound too much amongst us, so ought we to warn them of the Evil of the Leaven of the *Pharisees*, which is Hypocrisy. Our Lord in his Sermons inveighs against the *Sadducees*, but much more frequently against the *Pharisees*, that hypocritical Generation, as being the more subdalous, and consequently the more dangerous Sect.*

Seet. One great Fruit of the Spirit is *Love* or *Charity*, which alas is too rare in all its three Branches, *viz.* Giving, Forgiving, and favourable Judging, and yet a Minister's insisting on this is quarrelled, *Page 22.* of the Sermon preached at opening of the Synod of *Fife.* Doth not Faith work by Love? Is not Love the fulfilling of the Law? Is not this the first and great Commandment of the Law, to love the Lord our God with our Heart, Soul, and Strength; and the Second like unto it, to love our Neighbour as ourselves? Is not *the End of the Commandment Charity* out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned? From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain Jangling? Is not this something like vain, yea malicious Jangling, to say, "That the citing of such Texts recommending Charity, is a vile Abuse of Scripture Expressions? Why are you so unwary in your Censures? Is not universal Benevolence and Charity a commendable Thing? Is it not highly recommended to us by that beautiful Parable, (if not History) of our Lord's, *Luke x. 30, — 37.* of the Man that fell among Theeves, who stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead; he was neglected by the Priest and Levite, but relieved, and kindly dealt with by a poor *Samaritan*? A Warning to us who profess to be the Lord's Priests, not to be like these hypocritical, covetous, partial, unkindly, uncharitable Priests among the *Jews?*

Jews? Can this noble and God-like Grace of Charity be too much recommended, which seems to be the End of all Religion? Was not this one great End of Christ's giving such a Proof of Love to us, that we might be shamed out of our sour, surly, morose, uncharitable Temper, and excited to love one another with a pure Heart fervently? There is no doubt of it. *Eph. v. 1, 2. Be ye therefore Followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, &c.* Without doubt, there is a higher Degree of Love due to the Brethren, viz. those who bear evidently (so far as we can judge) the Marks of the Children of God; but yet we are exhorted to do good unto all Men as we have opportunity, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith, *Gal. vi. 10. Doth not our Saviour exhort us to imitate our Father in Heaven, who maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust.* It would be our Advantage to have it more frequently preached, and more universally practised.

Query 17. What Ground have you for being afraid of a Rational Religion? Would you have Religion to be without Reason? Shall we forego our Reason? *Is there not a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty hath given him Understanding?* *Job xii. 8.* Is it not the Candle of the Lord within us? Shall one Light contradict another?

ther? If this Candle be put out, where are we? What can we believe? What can we know? Can we be sure of any Thing? Shall we turn meer *Sceptics*? What Advantage would this give to Atheists and Infidels, who are to be dealt with in a way of Reason, and will not our Christian Religion admit a fair Reasoning? How shall we argue with Men that do not own the divine Original and Authority of the holy Scriptures? Will the citing a Text from *Moses* or *Paul* convince them, when they do not acknowledge their being divinely inspired? The Mouth of Atheists must be stopped, from the Consideration of the absolute Necessity of ascending to a first Cause, a necessary Self-existent and Self-sufficient Being. If there had been nothing from Eternity, there never could have been any Thing but an eternal Nothing. The World could never have been made, Man would never have been created; we behoved all to have slept eternally in the Womb of Non-existence. Must we not argue with such Men from the Consideration of God's Works which Man behold, the wonderful Variety, the stupendous Greatness of some, and the no less wonderful Smallness of others of them, the artificial Composure, the exquisite Art and Fineness, the proper Ends to which they are all of them adapted? These are sufficient to convince any Man who will let Reason speak, that there is a supreme, intelligent, and infinitely perfect Being, who

the Author and Maker of these wonderful Works ; to whom belongs Almighty Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and inexhaustible Goodness. Infidels also, or Deists, (as they are called) must be reasoned out of their Incredulity, and brought to believe, that the Scriptures are indeed a Divine Revelation, given to Man to conduct him in the Way of Virtue and Happiness. The Antiquity of these Writings, the Excellency of the Matter, the Sublimity of the Stile, the intrinsic and extrinsic Marks of their being from God, and not from Man, *viz.* the main End and Design to advance the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Man, to bring us into a Conformity to his Image, and the enjoying of his Favour, in which our Glory and Happiness consists ; which are Ends worthy of an infinitely good and perfect Being. The Harmony and Agreement of all the Parts, their Power and Efficacy, and wonderful Success, in turning many from Darkness to Light, from Satan to God, from setting their Affections on the alluring, though vain and perishing Pleasures of this World, and placing them on Things above ; the Care of Providence, in preserving them from being destroyed by the Malice of Devils, or Power of wicked Men ; the admirable Constancy, Fortitude, and Patience, yea unspeakable Joy, of many Thousands of holy Martyrs, who sealed the Truth of these Scriptures with their Blood ; the fulfilling of many illustrious and remarkable

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Prophecies, the working of innumerable Miracles. To which may be added, the Purity of the Precepts, the Sweetness of the Promises, the Dreadfulness of the Threatnings, and Brightness of the Examples contained in these Divine Writings of the Old and New Testament. How could Six Hundred Thousand fighting Men, besides Women and Children under 20 Years of Age, be deceived, when they saw the wonderful Works in the Land of *Ham*, when they all passed through the *Red Sea* as on dry Land, and when they all stood at the Foot of Mount *Sinai*, and saw the dreadful Fire, and heard the terrible thundering Voice of God speaking out of the Fire, and delivering to them his fiery Law, when they did all eat of the Manna, and drink the Water out of the Rock? And how could these wonderful Appearances be forgot, when they had Ordinances and Sacraments, Sabbaths, Sacrifices, divers Washings, and other Ceremonies, instituted on purpose as Memorials, to keep up the Remembrance of these glorious Works to all Generations? Our Infidels must be very unreasonable who give Credit to the History of *Cyrus*, *Alexander the Great*, *Julius Caesar*, and other great Men recorded by the *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, but will not believe the Things recorded by *Moses* and the Prophets under the Old Testament, and by the Apostles and Evangelists under the New? Is our holy Religion afraid to come to the Light, or ashamed

to show its Face? May not that be well
 owned to be a Divine Revelation that speaks
 so honourably of God, and gives such a glo-
 rious Account of his Perfections and Works,
 and shews unto Man his Original, his Fall,
 and the Method contrived by infinite Wil-
 dom, and appointed by ineffable Goodness, as
 a Remedy for his Sin and Misery? We need
 not be stumbled at the Gospel upon the Ac-
 count of its sublime and mysterious Truths;
 which, tho' some of them be above Reason,
 yet none of them are contrary unto it. *Can
 we by searching find out God, or can we
 search out the Almighty unto Perfection?*
 Job xi. 7. Yea, our shallow Capacities can-
 not penetrate into the meanest of his Works,
 how he makes the Corn and Grass to grow,
 and Flowers to appear on the Earth; how
 he makes the Sun, Moon and Stars to know
 the Time of their Rising and Setting; we do
 not know by what magnetick Virtue the Earth
 is poised, the Clouds are ballanced, the Sea
 doth ebb and flow, &c. Many Things are
 dark to us now both in the Works of Creation
 and Providence, and especially in the mysteri-
 ous Work of our Redemption, which shall be
 more clearly unfolded to us when we arrive
 at that happy State, where in his Light we
 shall see Light, yea see him as he is, and
 know him as we are known of him, of which
 the Gospel gives us a well grounded Hope.
 Would People be at more Pains to conform
 themselves to the Will of God, without doubt
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they would come more clearly to know, and more firmly to believe the Doctrine, that it is of God, and not of Man. But many are such Slaves to their vile Lusts, unruly Passions and Prejudices, that their Eyes are so blinded, that they cannot discern the Truth as it is in Jesus. *The Love of the World, and the God of this World blinds the Eyes of them that believe not,* John vii. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Matth. v. 8, 1 John iii. 3. When Men come to be convinced of the Truth of the Scriptures, then it is their Duty and Interest to search them, study them, meditate on them, and obey them, and call upon the Father of Lights by serious Prayer, that he may open the Eyes of their Understanding to understand the Scriptures, and to see the wonderful Things of his Law. If Men would be as serious in praying for the Illumination of the Spirit, as they would be in calling out for Help when their House is on Fire, or their Life in danger, there is good Ground to hope their Labour would not be in vain; but the Neglect of this is one great Cause of Unbelief; they do not seriously seek the Illumination of the Divine Spirit, and this will make them inexcusable, *Matth. vii. 7. Luke xi. 9. Matth. xi. 2. John xvi. 24. Jam. i. 6.*

Query 18. To what Purpose do you bring in the old Controversy about the publick Resolutions? Will you rekindle those Flames that consumed the Palaces of our *Jerusalem*? Would you again play those battering Rams that

that beat down her Walls? And why do you mention the good and learned Ministers that were upon the one Side of the Question, and put your Thumb on those of the other Side, who were no less worthy than they? You make honourable Mention of Mr. Samuel Rutherford, and Mr. James Guthrie, who were against these Resolutions; but don't you know, that Mr. Robert Bailly, Mr. David Dickson, and Mr. Robert Douglas, (who preached at the Coronation of King Charles II. and administered to him the Oath of the *Covenant*) Men of considerable Piety, Learning, and Prudence, were for these publick Resolutions? I will not take upon me to decide which of the two Parties were rightest; but have the Charity to think, that both of them acted according to their Light. I do not see to what good Purpose it is to throw in a Bone of Contention which is near 100 Years old, and which issued in the Overthrow of our Church Establishment. Had Ministers been more unanimous, their Enemies could not so easily have broke in upon them, and would scarce have adventured on it; but these Divisions, with the Treachery of some false Brethren among them, paved the Way for their Ruin. Will you sow again these Seeds of Division to fortify your new Scruples, and raise a Flame that may not be so easily quenched? *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* Different Men may have different Sentiments, and different Views, and conse-

consequently different Judgments: But why should this make a Breach in our Charity? *Who art thou that judgest thy Brother, or why doest thou set at nought thy Brother? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Wilt thou condemn him whom Christ hath received, &c.* Rom. xiv. 4.—10. The Sentiments of Men are not to be our Rule. This is only the Word of God, *To the Law and to the Testimony,* II. viii. 20. When Godly Men have different Sentiments we ought to judge favourably of both and need not espouse the one more than the other Side of a Question which is long since out of Doors.

Query 19. With what Confidence can you assert so peremptorily, That some of the Judicatories of this Church, whose Province it is to contend for the Sovereignty of Christ and the Rights of his Subjects, fall in with the Patrons and Heritors of the Nation, and thereby invade and tread upon the Rights of the Lord's People, by the violent Settlement up and down the Land? Have they settled any without the Consent of at least a Part of the People of a Parish, that joins with the Patron and Heritors in calling a Minister? Will any kindly Parent refuse to give Bread to his hungry Children? When a Son asks Bread will the Father give him a Stone? When he asks a Fish will he give him a Serpent? Why should not the Desire of those who seek to distribute the Bread of Life to them be granted?

granted? And why should any of their Neighbours be angry at this, when they are not hindered from making use of their Right in calling one whom they think fitter for them? Does not this look like Envy, or *Canis in presepe*, like a Dog in a Manger, who will neither eat himself, nor suffer the hungry Cattel to eat the Provender that lies before them. *Invidia sicuti non invenere tyrannus tormentum majus.* What an unjust Reflection is this to say, *That the late Act of Assembly is a new Wound given to the Prerogative of Christ, and the Privileges of his Subjects; and that whatever Church Authority may be in the Act, it wants the Authority of the Son of God.* How will you prove from the Authority of Christ that a Patron and Heritors, and perhaps 20 or 30 of the People joining with them, should not have a Minister? In what Part of the Bible hath Christ or his Apostles said this? And is this any Inroad on his Authority, or the Privileges of his Subjects, to grant a Minister to a smaller Number of Christ's Subjects, when there is no Possibility of providing for a greater Number? Is it not better that a Part of a Parish should have a Minister, than that there should be no Minister at all in a District of 20 or 30 Miles Compass? Why do you take Things by the wrong Handle, is not this a palpable Transgression of the Rules of Discretion and Charity? *Epictetus*, a Pagan Philosopher (if it be not Heresy to cite such

an one) could have taught you otherwise; He says, *Every Thing has two Handles, a right and a wrong. If we take Things by the right Handle, we shall have Peace in our Minds; but if by the wrong, our Passions will be set in a Ferment.* And a greater than he, the Apostle of the Gentiles, tells us, *That Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not itself, or is not rash; is not puffed up, doth not behave herself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things.* 2 Cor. xiii. 4,—7. And a greater than any of them says, *Matth. vii. 1, 2. Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: And with what Measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* This is a Part of his excellent Sermon on the Mount. I wish it may be more studied, and insisted on by us all.

Query 20. How impertinently do you bring in the Man with the Gold Ring, and gay Cloathing, as if he were preferred unto the poor Man in vile Raiment? Not to insist on the Distinction that Providence has made amongst the Sons of Men, and the Honour that God allows to be given to those to whom Honour is due; and that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men: For Kings, and all that

are in Authority, 1st Tim. ii. 1, 2. Rom. xiii. 1,—

I shall mention a like and parallel Case, and leave the World to judge how uncharitable, and out of the Way your Reflections are. Suppose a Gentleman call for the Minister of his Parish, and tell him, I have an Eye upon such a young Man to be a Teacher of my Children, and to perform the Worship of God in my Family, at least when I am absent. I hear a good Report of him, and desire that you may examine and try him, as to his Literature and Fitness for the Business I call him for. The Minister accordingly speaks to the young Man, calls for his Testimonials, tries him in the several Parts of Learning, and finding him qualified, recommends him to the Gentleman; exhorts and advises him to walk prudently and circumspectly, that he may do Good, and gain Respect in the Family: And so the young Man is received, and applies himself to his Business, to the Satisfaction of the Gentleman and his Family. In a few Days after this there comes to the Minister a poor Man, perhaps one of the Gentleman's Tenants or Cottars, and says, Sir, I have as much Need of one to teach my Children as my Landlord hath, I am far from the Parish School, the Ways are deep, the Weather bad, especially in the Winter Time, my Children are young and tender, they cannot go every Day two or three Miles to the School, and I am not

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able to board them in a House near the School; so I think it is very necessary to have one in my own House to teach them. Well, why not, says the Minister, if you be able to maintain him and reward him for his Pains. Alas, says the Man, I am not able, I am but poor and mean. What can I help that? (says the Minister) Then you must fall on some other Way for teaching your Children, or do the best you can to teach them yourselves. And if the Gentleman be so good as to invite your Children to come to his House, and be taught with his own, ought you not to thank him for his Kindness? Now if that Man shall for this take up a Grudge at the Minister, and exclaim upon him amongst his Neighbours, on all Occasions, at the Kirk-file, when People are at a Burial, or coming to wait on the Ordinances, saying, The Minister prefers the Man with the Gold Ring and fine Apparel to me, because I am but a poor Man; he respects the Rich more than the Poor; he despises the poor Subjects of Christ, he robs them of their Privileges: whereas he should have been a Guardian of them, &c. What think you of our Neighbour? (say the People) He is certainly in a Fever, he is raving, he is disordered in his Senses, what shall we do with him? See if you can perswade him to keep at home, till he settle and come to himself. How unjustly and foolishly does he rail upon our honest Minister, who we know is willing to serve

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and oblige the Poor as well as the Rich. But it is not in his Power to maintain a Chaplain in every Family of his Parish. His Stipend has enough ado to maintain his own Family. If this Man shall be suffered to ramble abroad, and rail at this Rate, he may fall into some Præmunire, and bring Mischief not only on his own Family, but on many others. The Case being so pat, and the Parallel so just, I need draw no Inferences, but leave the Application to yourself. I know nothing in Reason that can be answered to it, save one Objection, which I find to be in some people's Mouths, *viz.* That the Minister's Stipend is a Part of the Tithes that were consecrated to the Service of God, for the Maintenance of Gospel Ministers, and other pious Uses, and they do not belong to either Patron or Heritors; they paid nothing for them, they purchased their Lands with that Burden, and so they are none of theirs; the Poor have as good a Right to them as the Rich. Well, be it so; but are not they in the Hands of the Civil Government? And who can hinder the Government to dispose of them as they do of other publick Funds? If you can, by humble Petitions and Addressses, prevail with them to alter the Law and Act of Parliament, well and good; but I hope there is none so mad as to say, it can be done by force. *Is it fit to say to a King, Thou art wicked? and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* Job xxxiv. 18. *Canst thou draw out the*

Leviathan with a Hook ? Canst thou bind the Unicorn to thy Crib ? Job xxxix. 9. xli. 1.—

Further, if that poor Man shall prevail with some as distracted and mad as himself to beset the Gentleman's House, and hinder the Chaplain to enter, and if the Gentleman to defend himself, seek Assistance from the Magistrate to repel Force by Force, and thereby some of the poor People be hurt or imprisoned, and punished for their Riot and Sedition, whom will they have to blame for this but their own Folly ? Is it not better for People, in that Case, to hearken to the prudent Advice of the Town-clerk of *Ephesus* *Ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For we are in Danger to be called in Question for this Day's Uprore, there being no Cause whereby we may give an Account of this Day's Concourse,* Acts xix. 35.—40.

Query 21. What Strength is there in another Argument which I find in many People's Mouths, and which they make use of in their complaining, and railing at some late Settlements, viz. *He that entreteth not by the Door into the Sheepfold, but climbeth up some other Way, the same is a Thief and a Robber,* John x. 1. To which it may be answered, 1. Christ himself is the Door, *Verse 7. Verily verily I say unto you, I am the Door of the Sheep.* And no other can be called the Door, in a proper Sense, but he ; his Design being, to show that he is the true Mes-

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fiar, and all that came before him, or shall
 come after him, pretending to be the *Christ*,
 are but Thieves and Robbers. 2. Is there no
 other Door by which the inferior Shepherds
 may enter in to feed *Christ's* Sheep, but by
 the Call of the whole Sheep, or Plurality of
 them, who live within a certain Bounds?
 What if a Part only of those Sheep call or in-
 vite him, must that Part be neglected, be-
 cause the greater Part would rather have ano-
 ther? When Providence has nailed up the
 Door of an universal Call, why may not he
 enter by a less general Call, with the Consent
 and Approbation of the other Shepherds of
 the Flock? Why may not *Christ* by his Pro-
 vidence say to one of his Servants, Go feed
 my Sheep in such a Parish or Country-side,
 where there are some willing to receive you;
 and as for those that will not own you, leave
 them to me, I will take my own Method
 with them; you may try by a Godly and Mi-
 nisterial Behaviour, and by prudent and gentle
 Methods, if you can gain upon them: Yea,
 you must compel them to come in, but this
 Compulsion must not be by outward Force, by
 Fire and Sword, by Faggot and Halter, or
 surly Behaviour; but by mild and kindly
 Treatment, and strong Arguments. You must
 not think to do as the Priests of *mystical Ba-*
bylon do, who by Racks and Tortures, Scour-
 ging and Burning, compel my People to blas-
 pheme my Name, and deny the Truth, or to
 suffer the most cruel Torments that Hell can
 devise,

devise, or beastly wicked Men can inflict, till they be burnt at a Stake, or their Throats cut, as they did to a Number of my Witnesses, whom they shut up in a Church or Prison, and brought them out one by one blindfolded, and cut all their Throats. This is not the Method by which I will have my Gospel propagated, or my Truths defended. These abominable, cruel, hellish Methods are odious to me. I give them no Thanks who pretend to serve me in that Manner. But those faithful Servants who preach the Word in Season and out of Season, reprove, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine, may expect the Crown of Glory when the chief Shepherd shall appear.

The Scriptures are a clear and perfect Rule, when well understood, and rightly applied; but they must not be made a *Lesbian Rule*, or *Nose of Wax*, to turn to any Side Men please; or to make them speak whatever we have a mind. The *Romanists* make use of that same Text, *John x. 1.* to prove, That none can belong to Christ's Sheepfold, but those who own the Pope as the chief Shepherd under Christ, and who believe as their Church believes. The *Laudean* Faction, or *High-Flyers* amongst the *Prelatists*, make use of it, to prove, That no Minister can be ordained without Imposition of Hands by a *Diocesan* Bishop, and no Person can be truly baptized, but by one so ordained; yea, that they ought not to preach without the Bishop's Leave.

Leave. Thus Bishop Morley, Bishop of Winchester, asserted, That he, who, tho' lawfully ordained, should preach in any Congregation without the Bishop's Licence, comes not in by the Door, but is a Thief and a Robber. See Dr. Calamy's Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life, Vol. 1. Page 171.

Query 22. Why do ye so confidently assert, Page 41. That the Power of calling Ministers is, by the late Act of Assembly, principally lodged in the Hands of a Set of Men, who are generally disaffected to the Power of Godliness, to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of this Church? Are the Heritors and Elders of Scotland generally Enemies to the Power of Godliness? Are they all Malignants? Woes me, if Matters be so, we have a sad Church indeed, that deserves no other Name but *Ecclesia malignantium*. Is not this uncharitable to a Pitch? Are all the Heritors, many of whom are Elders, and are all the Elders generally Enemies? Why did you not make some Difference, but tar them all with one Stick, and put this *Stigma*, this *nigrum theta* on them all? 'Tis lamentable to see what Heights a furious, fiery Zeal will drive some People to. It is like a blind Horse full of Metal, without a Bridle, he runs away with his Rider, and either throws him in the Dirt, or plunges him into a Bogue or Whirlpool, or breaks his Neck over a Precipice. The furious Party of

of Zealots in *Jerusalem*, when besieged by the *Romans*, did more Mischief within than their Enemies could do without, as *Josephus* narrates in his History of the Wars of the *Jews*. Is it not the Height of Incivility to assert, That any Gentleman or Elder will be so abominably double, as to vote or subscribe a Call by himself or his Proxy to a Presbyterian Minister, and yet be an avowed Enemy (as you call them, *Page 42.*) to the Church of *Scotland*? I am sure, if any Gentleman do so, he neither acts like a good Christian nor like a Man of Honour. Is your general Censure a right dividing the Word of God? Is it a separating the Precious from the Vile? Is it not a condemning the Righteous with the Wicked? Is not this a justifying that Complaint you make of some Ministers, who speak against Professors in general, as if they were nothing but a Company of Hypocrites and Enthusiasts, a Company of Men, who tho' they will not curse and swear, drink drunk, and profane the Sabbath; yet they will trick and cheat, slander and backbite like the Devil. See Mr. C. Sermon, *Page 23.*

Query 23. What can you answer for your unseasonable way of venting your bitter Railings, and unjust Reflections on your Brethren, and the Judicatories of the Church, as you do at Communion Times, in your Sermons and Discourses at the Lord's Table? Witness your Sermon at *Perth, June 4. 1732,* on the

the Sabbath Evening after the Sacrament, from Isa. ix. 6, *The Government shall be on his Shoulders*; which you thought fit to subjoin to your Synod Sermon.

Is not the holy Sacrament of the Supper a Feast for Joy, a Marriage Feast, a Feast upon a Sacrifice, a Feast of Love, and consequently for Peace and Concord? But you make it a Feast for Strife and Debate, as the Jews of old did their Feasts, Isa. lviii. 4. Does not Solomon say, *A Feast is made for Laughter, and Wine maketh the Heart merry*, Eccl. x. 19. And behold a Greater than Solomon is here, and a greater Feast than was ever made either by Solomon, Abasuerus, Belshazzar or Herod, and greater Ground of Spiritual Mirth to all who eat Christ's Body, and drink his Blood in a suitable Manner, both because of the Master of the Feast, and Matter of the Feast, and the Occasion of it, viz. The Death of our blessed Redeemer, which, tho' it should fill us with Godly Sorrow, and Contrition of Heart for Sin, the procuring Cause of his Death; yet it may also fill the Believer's Heart with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, on the Account of the glorious Benefits of Redemption, purchased for us by the dear Price of his precious Blood. But instead of making his People's Hearts glad at the Remembrance of his Love more than Wine, you make them sad; when they should be sent away with Hearts full of Love to Christ, and to all his People and

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Servants,

Servants, you send them away full of Sorrow and Bitterness, with deep Prejudices against their Rulers both in Church and State; as if they were guilty of dreadful Apostacy, Unfaithfulness, Cruelty, and Treachery, and guilty of robbing Christ of his Prerogatives, and his poor Members of their Privileges: And so, instead of allaying their Spirits, by applying the mollifying Ointment of Divine Consolations, you rankle their Spirits, trouble their Minds, stir up their bad Humours, and make the raging Waves of their tumultuous Passions to swell up to the Brim. Instead of promoting their Edification and spiritual Consolation, you exasperate their Corruption; instead of pouring in the healing Balm of Divine Comfort, you make their Wounds to bleed afresh, with the corroding Vinegar of Wrath and Indignation. These who sow in Tears might reap in Joy; but you make them reap in Sorrow, sending them home with Vexation in their Hearts, and their Tears on their Cheeks; not so much for their own Sins wherewith they have pierced the Lord of Glory, as for the imaginary Loss of their Privileges, while in the mean Time they have lost no Privilege, unless it be the Benefit of a poor Stipend, which is no Loss at all, in Comparison of the Loss of Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. They have more need to be caution'd against Worldly Sorrow, which causeth Death; but *Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation,*

tion, not to be repented of, 2 Cor. ii. 10. If ever there be a Time when both Ministers and People ought to lay aside all *Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisies, and Envies, and all Evil speakings*, 1 Pet. ii. 1,—3. James i. 20,—26. Col. iii. 12. And put on (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; and above all putting on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness; it should certainly be at the Time of a Communion, when the Lord has been giving the greatest Instance of Mercy and Loving-kindness to the Children of Men, that ever was shown, or ever can be shown, in delivering up his only begotten Son to the Death for us all; and when they have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Is not then your Way of doing Business a miserable perverting of the Nature, and subverting or disappointing the great Design of this sacred Ordinance, which is to promote and cherish Love and Peace amongst the Professors of Religion? Shall we sit and feast with one another at the Lord's Table, and yet foster bitter Envy and Strife in our Hearts? Can this Way of Management be justified, when you spend four or five Pages of a Sermon immediately after the Sacrament, and fill them with bitter Invectives, and railing Accusations against your Brethren, and the late Act of Assembly, about planting vacant Parishes,

when the Right is devolved into the Hands of the Presbytery? What undecent and un-
timeous Insinuations are these, *That the Laws, Acts, and Constitutions of our Church don't bear the Stamp of Christ; That his Subjects are stript of their Rights, Privileges, and Immunities, which he has granted them, and purchased for them at the Price of his own Blood; That his little Ones are but little regarded; The Rich and Great are preferred before them, by the Partiality of our publick Acts.* How unjust and ill ground-
ed these Insinuations are, I hope will evident-
ly appear to any, who, without Byals and Prejudice, will impartially consider what is above represented. They may be convinced, that there is no Rape committed on Christ's Spouse, and no Bar laid in the Way of People's calling their own Ministers, unless it be their Inability, or which is worse, their Un-
willingness to provide for them, and to com-
municate to them their temporal Things, as their Overseers communicate unto them spi-
ritual Things. We have Reason indeed to fear (upon other Accounts than what you in-
sinuate, *Page 29.*) that there shall be a sad Reckoning ere all be done, for our Unfruitful-
ness under the Means of Grace, our Unthank-
fulness to God for the Light of the glorious Gospel, for the want of brotherly Love, for the Pride, Self-conceit, and Worldliness bounding amongst us, our loathing the heavenly Manna, Insensibleness of the great Mercy

Mercy and Kindness that God hath manifested towards us above many other Nations, both as to our Natural and Spiritual Privileges and Liberty. You need not think, that the Apology you make in your Preface to this Sermon serves to excuse you; it only shows that you have done the Thing deliberately, and that you are more dexterous in making Wounds, and widening of Breaches and Differences, than in healing the one or closing up the other. Without doubt the Government shall be still on Christ's Shoulders, which is Matter of rejoicing to all his faithful Followers; but no Thanks to them, who instead of coming to build up, come with both Hands to demolish and pull it down. I will not be so uncharitable as to say, this is *Finis operantis*; but one may on too good Ground say, it is *Finis operis*, in some late Performances and Actings. It seems not very agreeable to a spiritual Taste, to mix the Wine, and Milk, and Honey of Heaven, with such sour Sawce.

Query 24. What do you mean by your carping at Connection with Kings and Parliaments? Would you have the Church to declare War against the State, or be at Variance with it? Is it not more comfortable, that Church and State live amicably together, than that they should act contrary one to another, especially when no sinful Compliance is required on either Hand? Are we not obliged to Kings and Parliaments for their

their Protection against the Insults of the
Canaanites, that are still in the Land? Is
 it, not by their Help, that we have the peace-
 able Enjoyment both of our Sacred and Civil
 Rights? And that the wild Boars of the Fo-
 rest are not permitted to come in and ravage
 the Lord's Vineyard; that Enemies are not
 suffered to go to with Axes and Hammers,
 to hew down the carved Work of our Sanctu-
 ary? Would you bring back those *Marian*
 Days of the late *Tory* Reigns, when our
 Priests were cloathed with Sackcloth, and
 the Gates of our *Sion* mourned? Ought we
 not to honour and give Thanks to our Bene-
 factors, and to acknowledge them as our De-
 fenders and nursing Fathers? Has not our
 gracious King given great Encouragement
 for propagating and promoting Religion in
 the Highlands and Islands? Is not our
 Church Constitution established by Law, and
 declared a fundamental Article of the Union
 between *Scotland* and *England*? Is it not
 by Force of these Laws that we have Assem-
 blies and Judicatories for Doctrine, Worship,
 Discipline and Government, in the most so-
 lemn and publick Manner, without having
 the Fear of Man to be a Snare to us? True
 it is, that the chief Beauty and Glory of the
 Church consists in her Connection with the
 chief Corner-stone; but does her paying due
 Respect to Magistrates, and obeying their
 lawful Commands, mar or hinder that Con-
 nection? Is it not our Duty to pray, That
 all

all Kings and States may be united to Christ, and in their Station magnify him as the Head of the Corner? That as by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice, so they may see it to be their true Interest, as well as their great Duty, to protect, advance, and promote the Prosperity of his Kingdom; That the happy Day may come, when the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, as prophesied, *Isa. lx. and lxii Chap. Rev. xi. 15.*

Query 25. What Necessity is there for the Fling you give to our Church Judicatories with respect unto her Politicks? Can you brand them with any sinful Politicks? Are not honest Politicks very consistent with true Piety? Did not *Moses, Josuah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, David, Hushai, Solomon, &c.* make good Use of Politicks? Did not the Prophet *Jeremiah*, by the Command of God, advise the Kings of *Moab, Ammon, Edom, Tyre and Sidon*, and *Zedekiah King of Judah*, to subject themselves to *Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon*, to whom the Lord had gifted all these Kingdoms? And was not this a good Politick, rather to become Tributaries to that encroaching Monarch, than by a stubborn Resistance to expose their Lands to be laid waste, and themselves to be massacred? Our Lord Jesus Christ advises and recommends to all his Disciples and especially Ministers, to be wise

as *Serpents*, and harmless as *Doves*, *Matth.* x. 16. And did he not himself give Evidence of singular Wisdom and Policy, in his Answers to the captious and ensnaring Questions of his Enemies, particularly in that about paying Tribute to *Cesar*, *Matth.* xxii. 22. *Render therefore unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's, and unto God the Things that are God's?* The Apostle Paul also made use of a notable Piece of Policy for his own Preservation, when he raised a Dissension amongst his Enemies, by declaring himself to be on the *Pharisees* Side of the Question, anent the Resurrection from the Dead; and thereby escaped their Fury for that Time. And thereafter, when he was in Danger by the inveterate Malice of the *Jewish* Rulers, he *appealed unto Cesar*, *Acts* xxiii. 7. xxv. 10, 11. Have we not all need to study that Wisdom that is from above, which does not forbid us the Use of honest Policy. Wisdom is profitable to direct in dubious Cases, it makes the Face to shine, it is a noble Gift of God, which *Solomon* sought from God, and preferred it before *Riches*, *Wealth*, *Honour*, and the *Life* of his Enemies, yea, before a long *Life* to himself, *2 Chron.* i. 7,—12. If Ministers should make use of such hellish Policy as *Pharaoh*, *Saul*, *Jeroboam*, *Haman*, and others made use of, they would be justly blameable; but when nothing like this can be charged on them, it is not very fair Dealing to insinuate, as the

they used *sinistrous Methods* to obtain their own carnal Ends. They do not *creep into Houses leading captive silly Women laden with Sins, led away with divers Lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth,* 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. They take no Pleasure in Railing and speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them, as the Apostle Paul foretels, that some of the *Ephesian Elders* would do, *Acts* xx. 30. Nor do they make use of the Slight and cunning Craftiness of false Apostles, and Self-seeking Men, whereby they ly in wait to deceive, and thereby make weak and unstable People to be as Children tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, as he gives Warning in his Epistle directed to that Church, *Eph. iv. 14.* Nor do they with *feigned Words make Merchandice of People's Souls,* as Peter warns, concerning the *false Prophets that should arise in the latter Days,* 2 Pet. ii. 3. Such indeed have been the wretched Politicks of too many, who have set up to get themselves a Name and a Following; and I wish heartily there may be none such amongst us. We have need to take heed to our selves and to our Doctrine, that we do not, by imprudent Management in the Matters of God, pull down an old House upon our Heads, by provoking our Friends to become our Enemies. Suffering is in all Cases to be chosen, rather than Sin; but when there is no Sin in the Case, is it not Madness

for People to throw themselves wilfully into a Furnace?

Query 26. Why do you propose such an odd Question, Page 41. *But what would our Forefathers have thought, or what will succeeding Generations think of this Act of Assembly, whereby Malignants are vested not with a Civil or Military, but with an Ecclesiastical Power? &c.* For Answer to the said Question, 1. As to succeeding Generations, we know not what their Circumstances may be, and therefore cannot pretend to answer for their Thoughts and Opinions of Things: But I think, that one may venture to say, If their Circumstances be no worse than ours, they will have no great Reason to complain of their spiritual Guides, as if they had receded from the chief Corner-stone our Lord Jesus Christ; as if he were rejected in his poor Members, and the Rich of this World put in their Room. 2. As to our Forefathers, one may easily guess what they would think and say to such Murmurers and Complainers as you. If one of these blessed Spirits should descend from their heavenly Mansions, and visit the Regions below, and declare his Opinion of Matters now in debate, it may be supposed, he would address himself to you in Words to this Purpose. *'O foolish People and unwise, do you thus requite the Lord for all his Mercies, and his favourable Dispensations of Providence towards you? Has not God done much for you, beyond*

yond any Nation in the World? You have
 enjoyed 44 or 45 Years of great Peace and
 Tranquillity, having none to trouble or mo-
 lest you, none to hinder you from serving
 God according to his own Institution, and
 thereon you reap the Fruit of our Prayers,
 and what some of us had foretold: You have
 been highly privileged beyond us. We en-
 dured the Heat of the Day, we had the Storm
 almost continually blowing in our Face, and
 were obliged to strive against Wind and Tide;
 but you have had a clear and serene Sky,
 you have enjoyed *Halcyon* Days, God has
 given to you the two great Blessings of Truth
 and Peace, and any Strugglings you have
 had was but like contending with Footmen,
 but we have been obliged to run with the
 Horsemen; you have lived plentifully in the
 Land of *Goshen*, but we were obliged to
 wander in a Wilderness, and to struggle with
 the Swellings of *Jordan*. Our Rulers ru-
 led us with Rigour and Force, but your
 Rulers have ruled you with Mildness and
 Clemency; they have been nursing Fathers
 and nursing Mothers unto your Church; but
 we had Rulers who were as Step-fathers or
 Step-mothers. You have enjoyed the Privi-
 lege of Gospel Ordinances in great Purity
 and Plenty; you have been allowed to do
 every Thing in the House of the God of
 Heaven, according to the Appointment of
 the God of Heaven. Nothing has hindered
 you from preaching the Word in Season and

• out of Season, administering the Sacraments,
 • and dispensing the Discipline of the Church
 • according to the Rule of the Word, with-
 • out Let or Molestation; but we were hunt-
 • ed like the Partridge in the Wilderness,
 • pursued from Mountain to Hill, forced to
 • wander about, and to hide ourselves in Den
 • and Caves of the Earth. Great Numbers of
 • us were summoned before Courts, apprehend-
 • ed and thrust into loathsome Prisons, or confi-
 • ned to barren Rocks of the Sea. We were
 • arraigned before cruel and rigorous Judges,
 • and were condemned, some to Banishment,
 • some to Confiscation of their Goods and
 • Gear, to the Ruin of our Families, and
 • some to Death itself; being obliged to seal
 • the Truth with our Blood. Many of us
 • were tortured, many dismembered, many
 • were sent to foreign Plantations, many were
 • drowned in the Sea. But you have not
 • suffer'd any of these Things; and yet you
 • murmur and repine like foolish Children,
 • who are never content, tho' they be well
 • dealt with; and too like unto the Children
 • of *Israel*, that unthankful Generation, whom
 • the Lord by a strong Hand, and an out-
 • stretched Arm, brought out of the House of
 • Bondage, and for whom he wrought so ma-
 • ny Wonders, both in the Land of *Egypt*, at
 • the *Red Sea*, and in the Wilderness; and
 • yet they murmured and tempted God, de-
 • spising his Mercies, and loathing the Man-
 • na that was rained down upon them from
 • Heaven,

Heaven, and the Water that flowed out of
 the stony Rock. Yea, some of them rebel-
 led against *Moses* and *Aaron* in the Camp,
 for which they were punished in a dreadful
 Manner, by the Earth's opening her Mouth,
 and swallowing them down quick. What
 think ye would we have given for the happy
 Situation you have been in for many Years?
 What Thanks, what Songs of Praise would
 we have sung to our God for such Delive-
 rance as this? How would our Hearts have
 rejoiced, if the Lord had been pleased to
 bring back our Captivity, and given us free
 Liberty to build the City and Temple of
 our *Jerusalem*? We would have reckoned
 it a Day of great Things; but many of you
 count it but a Day of small Things, and
 therefore despise it. As for the Grievances
 you labour under, you are most unjust in
 blaming your Watchmen for them, as if
 they were guilty of smiting and wounding
 the Spouse of Christ, and taking away her
 Vail from her. What Hand have they had
 in bringing these Grievances on you? Yea,
 do they not bewail them? And have they
 not given in Petitions, Addresses, and Re-
 monstrances against them? And do they not
 endeavour to their utmost, to make the
 best of them they can, in their present Cir-
 cumstances? The Things you complain of
 mainly are the *Patronages*, and *Toleration*,
 and the late *Act of Assembly*. 1. As
 for *Patronages*, Did not we labour under
 the

' the same Grievance, in much harder Cir-
 ' cumstances than you are in? And why do
 ' you make such Outcries, as if the Power of
 ' the Church were wholly taken away, and
 ' all were going to Ruin? Can the Patron
 ' present any but one who is of your own Com-
 ' munion, and approved by your Presbyteries?
 ' And has not the Presbytery still the Power
 ' of receiving or rejecting the Presentee as
 ' they find him worthy or unworthy? And
 ' as to those who will not join with one pre-
 ' sented by the Patron, found qualified by the
 ' Presbytery, called by at least a Part of the
 ' Congregation, and settled accordingly, (any
 ' Opposition that's made, flows more from
 ' Humour and Pride, than from any solid
 ' Reason, at least in many) there is nothing
 ' to hinder People from calling and maintain-
 ' ing other Ministers, and getting them plant-
 ' ed by the Presbytery in an orderly Way.
 ' Why then such tragical Exclamations and
 ' iniquitous Reflections, as if your spiritual
 ' Guides had robbed the People of the Rights
 ' and Privileges bequeathed unto them by the
 ' Lord Jesus Christ? Seeing, 1. Their spi-
 ' ritual and natural Privilege is still intire.
 ' 2. As to their being deprived of the Benefit
 ' of the Legal Maintenance, and so obliged
 ' to maintain such Ministers upon Funds of
 ' their own, how can a Presbytery, or any
 ' Church Judicatory help them in this? And
 ' with what Face can it be said, That the
 ' Judicatories of the Church have robbed them

of this worldly Privilege? Is it not the Civil Government that has the Disposal of these publick Funds? Another Thing you complain of, is the boundless *Tolleration*. But have your Watchmen had any Hand in this? Did they establish it, or do they countenance it? Is it not your Business to endeavour to stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, and so put a Stop to the spreading of damnable Errors and Heresies, by Praying, Preaching, Reasoning, and Writing against them? These are the spiritual Weapons that your great Lord and Master has put into your Hands: But as to the temporal Sword, you have nothing to do with it; seeing Christ's Kingdom is not of this World. This also may serve for an Answer, with respect to the censuring and punishing of such Members of the Church as fall into Scandals. There is nothing to hinder you from challenging, admonishing, and reproofing, and otherwise censuring scandalous Persons, and restoring them upon their Repentance. As for those who will not submit to the Discipline of the Church, What have you any more to do but to excommunicate, or declare that they are none of your Communion? So that there seems no great Necessity of applying to the Civil Magistrate, to force or oblige them to submit to Discipline. Does not this seem to derogate from the Wisdom and Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church,

Church, as if his own Laws and Institutions
 were not sufficient for obtaining the Ends of
 his spiritual Kingdom? And was not this
 all the Power which the Rulers of the Chri-
 stian Church had for more than 300 Years
 after Christ? And I believe none will de-
 ny, but that the Christian Church was as
 pure, as holy, as zealous, as spiritual, and
 heavenly Minded; and as far above the
 Riches, Pleasures, and Honours of this World
 in those Days, as the Generality of Chri-
 stians have been at any Time since the Day
 of *Constantine the Great*, who made Chri-
 stianity the publick established Religion of
 the Empire. It is true indeed, it is most
 comfortable when *Moses* and *Aaron* join
 together, when Civil and Ecclesiastick Go-
 vernors work to one another's Hands, en-
 couraging Piety and Virtue, and true Reli-
 gion; and in curbing Vice, restraining Im-
 piety, by censuring and punishing scandalous
 Offenders. But seeing the Civil Authority
 does not hinder you from dispensing all the
 Ordinances of Christ, you have not so great
 Cause to complain, you have still all the
 Power that Christ left to his Church. Which
 if you manage with holy Zeal and Christi-
 an Prudence, you have no Reason to doubt
 of your being a flourishing Church. And
 as for those disorderly Persons that disor-
 der or contemn your Authority; Are you not
 as well without them as with them? May
 you not say with the beloved Disciple
 John

John, 1 Epistle ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. The refractory and contumacious Sheep must be left to the great Shepherd of the Flock, who wants not a Club or Crook, by which he can either chastise and punish, or convince and reclaim Offenders, and will be sure to do it in his own Time and Way. It is not for you to limit the Holy One of Israel. Those who will not touch and submit to the golden Sceptre of his Righteousness and Grace, shall one Day be broken in Pieces by the Iron Rod of his Indignation and Wrath. Take heed that there be none among you, who, according to Popish Principles, will grasp at both Civil and Ecclesiastick Powers. What is this, but to say, with the pretended Vicar of Christ, *Ecce duo gladii hic*. Content yourselves with the Power that Christ has bequeathed unto you, and remember what his faithful Servant and Apostle Paul says, 2 Cor. x. 4. For the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God. And the Lord grant you Wisdom and Grace to wield these Weapons aright. Ephes. vi. 10, 11,

12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, &c. Finally, Brethren, be strong in the Lord, &c. Mind the habitual Disposition of the primitive Christians, 2 Cor. iv. 18. For we look not to Things which are seen, which are but temporal &c. Your great Business should be, as Ministers of the Gospel, to travel in Birth till Christ be formed in the Souls of the People, and to inculcate upon them the absolute Necessity of Regeneration, fleeing to Christ and taking on his Yoke, which is easy, and putting away the Evil of their Doings, walking as becomes the Gospel; and to put them frequently in Mind of the Danger of continuing in a sinful Course: And if any of them will not hearken unto you, you cannot help it, tho' your Souls may weep for them in secret. And no doubt but it will be great Grief of Heart to you, if you see any of them perishing in their Ignorance, Unbelief, Worldliness, Profaneness, Slothfulness, Formality, &c. But you may rejoice in this, that if you be faithful, your Reward is with your God. The Prophets under the Old Testament, the Apostles, and all their faithful Successors in the Ministerial Work under the New, have had but too much Cause of complaining, that they spend their Strength in vain, and their Labour for nought, and Israel is not gathered: But this should not make you faint and go backward, nor weary of the Work of God. See that you still hold on in a Course of

of Diligence, and humble Dependence on the Assistance of him, in whom all Fulness dwells, that out of his Fulness you may receive and Grace for Grace; and see that you spend your Time and Talents more profitably, than in running down and weakening the Hands of your honest and faithful Brethren, by misrepresenting them before Multitudes of People at solemn Occasions, to the great Prejudice of the Gospel, and Interest of Religion.

Query 27. Do you not remember that we are, by our Covenants, sworn against Schism, as well as against Heresy, Popery, Prelacy, and Superstition? And it may be thought strange that some People, who profess a great deal of respect to the Covenants, instead of extirpating Schism, fall upon Ways and Means to propagate it; by raising Divisions in this well constituted Church, and so, like the Viper, eat out the Bowels of their Mother. Before People make a Separation, they would be well advised as to the Grounds on which they separate; that they be such as may not only satisfy their own Conscience, but such as they may answer for at the great Day of Accounts, before they make such Clamour and Noise upon Things that are far remote from the Fundamentals of Christianity. I hope you will not deny, but that Brethren who differ from you in some lesser Points, have the Glory of God, and the Interest of Christ's Kingdom, together with the Constitution of this

poor Church, before their Eyes, as well as you, and are grieved at the Heart to see some People so full of fiery Zeal about Matters which may be borne with, after they have been at due Pains to get them amended. We have all of us need to take heed, Ministers as well as others, lest it be said unto us, *Why is there a Price in the Hand of a Fool to get Wisdom, seeing he has no Heart to it?* Prov. xvii. 16. Lest, when instead of improving the favourable Circumstances we are in to the Glory of God, and Edification of his People, we be found guilty of casting Fire into God's Sanctuary, and renting in Pieces Christ's seamless Coat. It would be remembered, that Heresiarchs, and Masters of new Sects, have always pretended a great deal of Zeal and Sanctity; and it hath been observed that the most destructive Divisions that have happened in the Christian Church, have been either about deep and inscrutable Mysteries, or about Modes and Forms, and Ceremonies, and imposing of new Terms of Communion, while the most essential and undeniable Points of Religion have been too much neglected. What dreadful Woes does our Lord Jesus Christ denounce against the Scribes and Pharisees, for their nice Scrupulosities, in tithing of Mint, Cummin, and Annise, while they neglected the weightier Points of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith? Do you think to get yourselves a Name, by raising up a new upstart Sect? What Advan-

tage can you propose to Religion, or to your selves in so doing? We read of a certain vain and foolish Man, who, to get himself a Name, burnt the famous Temple of *Diana*; and of *Empedocles*, who, to gain himself the Reputation of an immortal God, threw himself into the burning Mountain *Ætna*: But the Event discovered the Folly and Vanity of his Expectation, when his iron Patons were thrown out with the Ashes and Smoke, from the Mouth of the said Mountain.

Query 28. Why so many loud Complaints against the foresaid Act of the *late General Assembly*? 1. Were not our Forefathers diffculted in this Matter, while they proposed sometimes one Method, sometimes another, with respect to the calling of Ministers? 2. Was not this Method settled by our own Parliament, *Anno 1690.* with Advice of the old reverend Presbyterian Ministers that were then alive? And was it not successfully followed for a good many Years? And tho' Endeavours were used to procure the Consent of the rest of the People, yet they did not always gain the Whole: And many Ministers thus settled, were found to acquit themselves acceptably and honourably. 3. Are not Heritors and Elders a very considerable Part of every Congregation? And may not they be sustained as representing the Whole, as well as a Master of a Family may represent 20 or 30 Persons, all Members of his Family? 4. Are not Heritors and Elders as proper Judges of

of a Minister's Qualifications as other People? Heritors are many of them Gentlemen of good Parts, and of good Literature, having had liberal Education, and many of them well affected to Religion, and to our Church Constitution. And as to the Elders, are not they ordinarily chosen of the best, the wisest, the gravest, and most knowing of the People?

5. Are not Intrants sufficiently tried, according to that Command, *1 John iv. 1. Try the Spirits.* For, 1. They are tried by the Professor under whom they study, and by their Fellow Students, who are both Witnesses and Censurers of their Performances. 2. They are tried by a Presbytery, and found qualified to preach the Gospel, as Probationers. 3. They are tried by the Heritors, Elders, and others, who have heard them preach, and approved them. 4. They are tried again by the Presbytery, where they are to be ordained or settled. 5. The whole People who have heard them several Times before their Ordination have Liberty to object, and if they have any Prejudices they may lay them before the Presbytery; who if they find these Prejudices to be causeless, are appointed by the Act of Assembly 1649, to ordain and fix them as Ministers of the Congregation. 6. The most ordinary Objection that I have heard against any Intran by the People that are prejudiced at them was, That they are not benefited or edified by their Doctrine; but this, for the most Part, is their own Fault;

Fault : For if they were more attentive to the Discourse delivered, and would lay aside their Prejudices, they would be more edified, and would certainly receive more Benefit ; especially when they come to be more accustomed to his Method of Preaching, and Preaching is not the only Part of a Minister's Work amongst a People for their spiritual Advantage. 7. It has been found, that where Ministers have been planted against the Inclinations of a good Number of the People, yet they have afterwards unanimously join'd with him ; and on the other Hand, when People have got their Choice they have afterwards repented of it. 8. Was not this Act transmitted by way of Overture to the several Presbyteries, and sundry of them returned their Opinion to the last Assembly, that it should pass into an Act : And as for those that were against it, their Reasons were heard and maturely considered, and found to be of no Weight. 9. It has been oftentimes found, that Princes and Elders have been in the right, when People have been altogether wrong. A notable Instance of this you will find in the Case of *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxvi. where he, in Obedience to God's Call, comes to the Courts of the Lord's House, and preaches a Sermon of Repentance to all the People that came from the several Cities of *Judah* to worship at the solemn Feast ; the People are so far from hearkening to the Word of God, and taking with the Warning, that by the

the Instigation of the false Prophets and corrupt Priests, they gather together in a tumultuous Rabble, lay Hands upon him, and pronounce him worthy of Death: The Princes and Elders of *Judah* hearing of this, come from the King's House into the Temple, and taking Cognizance of the Matter, and having heard the People's Accusation, and the Prophet's Defence, they absolve him, and deliver their Sentence in these Words, *This Man is not worthy to die; for he has spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord our God.* So these Princes and Elders deliver the Lord's faithful Servant, whom the wicked People had condemned. It is true, that some of the People joined with the Princes in this Sentence of Absolution, who, it seems, were such as were not influenced by the Instigation of the wicked Clergy; or when they came to be better informed, and influenced by the prudent Advice of the Princes and Elders. And was not our Lord Jesus Christ unjustly condemned by the People, who cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*; when he was absolved by the Conscience of *Pilate* a Pagan Governor, who declared before all the People, *I find no Fault in him, what Evil hath he done?* Altho' afterwards acting from a Principle of Popularity, and for fear of losing his Post in the Government, as being no Friend to *Cesar*, he pronounced an unjust and cruel Sentence against him, first to scourge him, and then to crucify him; and

to to please and gratify the People, he acted against the Light of his Conscience. In like Manner, the holy Apostle *Paul*, when he was apprehended, and like to be murdered by the wicked tho' zealous People, was relieved by *Claudius Lysius*, the Commander of the Roman Forces, who were then Masters of *Jerusalem*, and who, when he had heard of a wicked Plot of a certain Number of the People, who had bound themselves by an Oath to take away the Apostle's Life, sent him away under Cloud of Night, under the Protection of a strong Guard, to *Cesarea*, unto *Felix* the Governor of the Province, and when afterwards the wicked Priests and People, in Prosecution of their false Zeal, continued to persecute the Apostle, sent down a Committee of their Number, together with *Tertullus* their hired Orator and mercenary Advocate, to accuse him before the Governor, and demand Sentence of Death against him, he was absolved by the concurring Verdict of *Felix*, *Festus*, and King *Agrippa*, who declared, *That this Man might have been set at Liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.* And the Reason of his appealing unto *Cesar* was, That he expected more Equity and Justice at the Hands of a Heathen Emperor, than of those who professed to be the Priests and People of God. The History of this you find recorded at large in the Book of the *Acts* from Chap. xxi. to the End of Chap. xxvi. To this may be added, That

we find in Scripture many Instances of the People's persecuting and killing of the faithful Servants of God, but not one Instance of their calling any to be their Minister, except it be that of the Man of *Macedonia*, who appeared unto *Paul* in a Night's Vision, saying, *Come over to Macedonia and help us*; which is nothing to the Purpose for proving the People's Right to call their own Ministers, for the Men of *Macedonia* at this Time were all Pagans, and the Man that appeared unto *Paul* was an Angel sent of God, to notify to the Apostle, That it was his Will and Pleasure that he should go and preach the Gospel to the *Macedonians*. 10. Since you had the Opportunity of declaring your Mind in the National Assembly, to what Purpose is it for you to amuse the People, and put a toom Spoon in their Mouth (so to speak) at their most solemn religious Assemblies, by telling them of a Right which they either cannot, or will not exert or make use of? And as to what you say, of your Hopes of having this Act afterwards considered and repealed, if you can propose a better Scheme, and a more feasible Method for planting of Churches to universal Contentment, I shall not be against it; for never any of our General Assemblies pretended to be infallible, nor are their Acts like the Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, that cannot be altered. Is not your Management in this like that of those who will neither do nor let do; or like the

the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who would neither enter in themselves, nor suffer others to enter in, *Matth.* xxiii. 13. 11. Might not the Assembly have appointed Presbyteries to keep the Right of planting Kirks still in their own Hands, and so not to have given themselves or the Parish the Trouble of an Election? And this is said to have been the Opinion of some of our ancient Worthies, particularly of Mr. *David Calderwood*, the Author of *Altare Damascenum*; and this seems to have been the Method in the Apostles Days, who went themselves, or sent others to distant Countries and Cities, preaching the Gospel, as they were directed either by the ordinary Course of Providence, or by the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit. And altho' the Fruit of their Labours seemed to be at first but little, like a Grain of Mustard Seed, yet it did quickly spread into the Bulk of a great Tree, full of Branches, Leaves and Fruits, according to Christ's Prediction, *Matth.* xiii. 31, 32. 12. Does not your Opposition in this Matter exceedingly gratify the Humour of *Tobias*, and *Sanballat*, and *Setherboznai*, and their Companions, who were always Enemies to the building of the Walls of our *Jerusalem*, as those were in the Days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*? And seeing the Strength of Burden-bearers is but small, have we not rather need of more Hands to help us, than of the discontented Murmuring of some Children among us, who hinder

and mar the Work? And if there be any Heritors and Elders that are (as you say) Enemies to the Power of Godliness, and to the Church of Scotland, Men of that Kindney do not care tho' there were not an honest Minister planted in the whole Church; and so you take the most effectual Way to gratify them, and make them a greater Compliment than the General Assembly has done by their Act.

*Hoc Ithacus velit, & magno mercen-
ter Atride.*

13. Have not the Heritors greater Interest in a Parish than moveable Tenants, Cottars, or menial Servants? And why should these who may continue but two or three Years, have Power to impose a Minister on these whose Families and Residence are fixed from Generation to Generation? Suppose Ten Heritors in a Congregation, and each of these have Six Tenants, how easy is it for Sixty Voters to carry their Point against Ten? Again, will any Tenant, who has a Tack for Forty, Fifty, or Sixty Years, think that his Servants and Cottars, who may be out of the Parish in three or four Months, should have equal Power of electing a Minister, as he who is to continue all his Lifetime, and his Son after him? Suppose then Thirty Tenants in a Parish, having each of them but Three Servants and Cottars, how easy is it

it for Ninety to outvote Thirty? We have been told, ('tis true) that the Heritor may be changed before the Tenant. This may hold in some particular Instances; but is it always so? Or generally so? Will any wise Man venture an even Wager, where it is odds of Ten to One, that he may be a Loser? Or suppose it were but Five to One; there is no Rule without an Exception, and there is no Scheme that can be advanced, that will not be liable to some Difficulties; And does not common Sense teach us to choose that which is liable to fewest Difficulties? And I am perswaded, that in this Case the Odds is at least Ten to One, betwixt an Heritor and a Tenant losing his Interest in a Parish. What is it then for People to advance such weak Arguments? Is it not like a Man carried down a rapid Stream? He catches at a Straw to save himself from drowning. Or like a Scholar pinch'd with an Argument? His Pride won't allow him to confess that he has the wrong or weak End of the String, but to keep himself in Countenance, he advances some ridiculous Distinction, or out-of-the-Way Assertion, which serves only to furnish Matter of Laughter to his Opponent and the Spectators.

Query 29. Why do you make such an odious Comparison betwixt those *Jewish* Builders, and the Builders of our *Jerusalem*, as if they were equally guilty with them in despising the *Messias*, and rejecting the chief Corner-

Corner-stone? Were I as ill-natur'd as you, I could run a Parallel betwixt the Jewish Builders and some Builders in our Day in many Particulars; but I love not to widen Differences and keep up Debate, nor to render Railing for Railing, nor Accusation for Accusation, but rather to cast a Mantle of Charity over a Brother's Infirmities, by pitying his Weakness, and forgiving his calumnious Speeches, and praying the great Master Builder that he may bring him into a better Temper, which is more conform both to the Precept and Example of our blessed Lord, and more contributive to the Honour of Religion, and Peace of our Church. The Wisdom which is from above teaches us to *be first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy.* Let us mind the Words of the Apostle James, iii. 13, 14, 15. *Who is a wise Man, and endued with Wisdom and Knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter Envyng and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* O that these Words were written on all our Hearts as with a Pen of Iron, and the Point of a Diamond. We have all of us Reason to be jealous of ourselves, and not to boast of our own Strength, for we know

not

not what we would do, if we were left to ourselves in a Day of Temptation. I have heard some, who when they have been told, *That if they were Patrons themselves, would be as tenacious of their Birthright and Privileges as any Nobleman or Gentleman in the Country.* They have answered, *Far be it from them, they would be loath to rob People of their Right in calling their own Minister.* Such Persons would remember what *Hazael*, the King of Syria's General, said to the Prophet *Elisba*, when he told him weeping, what Mischief he should do to the Children of *Israel* when he should become King, *Their strong Holds wilt thou set on Fire, and their young Men wilt thou slay with the Sword, and wilt dash their Children, and rip up their Women with Child.* What! (says he) *is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do this great Thing?* And yet he did it for all that, when he came to be King, as the Lord had shewed unto his Servant. He did all this, notwithstanding his seeming Modesty at the Time, and his pretended Aversion from such horrid Cruelty, *Kings viii. from 7 Verse to 13.* And a better Man than he, *viz. Peter*, an honest Disciple of Christ, said with great Confidence, *Tho' all Men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended;* and yet he denied him Thrice, *Matth. xxvi. 33, to 35.* notwithstanding of what he said to him, *Tho' I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*

then. Let him that stands take heed lest he fall.

I hope, D. B. you will pardon my Freedom, (for *faithful are the Wounds of a Friend*) and in Charity construct, that these Remarks flow from a sincere Love to our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Peace of our *Jerusalem*, which we are all bound to pray for: And not from any Disrespect to you, whom I honour in the Lord, on the Account of your Gifts and Talents, wishing only, that they may be better employed, than in defaming and running down our poor Mother Church, in her Ministers and Judicatures. The dumb Son of *Cræsus*, when his Father was like to be killed, cried out to the Soldier, *Kill not Cræsus*; and shall all the Sons of *Sion* be so dumb, as not to open their Mouth in her Defence, when she is so shrewdly bespattered and reproached? Is there no other Way to satisfy your Conscience, and exoner yourselves, than by publickly railing and traducing the Mother that bare you, and so exposing her to the Laughter of Enemies, and the Contempt and Displeasure of honest tho' short-sighted Friends? Have we not great Need of maintaining Peace and Union among ourselves, when there are so many Enemies without, who wait for our Halting? A great deal might be said on this Head; I shall only briefly touch at some Heads, which I recommend to your serious Consideration.

I. The Beauty, Excellency, and Advantage of

of Union, and its absolute Necessity; *Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, &c. Psal. cxxxiii.* 1. A Bundle of small Rods cannot easily be broken, while it is tied together; but when they are taken out one by one, may be easily nipt in Pieces. 2. The great Scandal and Prejudice of Division in a Church or Kingdom; a Kingdom or a House divided against itself cannot stand, as our Lord plainly tells us. 3. What a Reproach it is for any, especially Ministers, to be Troublers of *Israel*? who, instead of bringing Water to quench the Flames, throw Oil into them, to make them burn more fiercely, 4. How much it grieves the Hearts of our best Friends, and gratifies the malicious Humour of sworn Enemies. *Gabal, Ammon, and Amaleck* combine and plot together against *Israel* and *Jerusalem*, and shall *Jerusalem* be so foolish, as by Division, to open the Gates to let in the common Enemy? 5. What a Wickedness is it to burn the House that gives us build, and to spit in the Face of the Mother that feeds us? 6. What a Reproach is cast upon our excellent Constitution and beautiful Order? 7. How small a Spark may kindle a great Flame? 8. How little Conscience is concerned in this Matter, when our Judicatories have full Liberty to act, according to the Directions of *Zion's King*? 9. How unjustifiable it is to mis-

lead unthinking People, who follow their Leaders in the Simplicity of their Hearts, as *Israel* did *Absalom* in his unnatural Rebellion? 10. How much precious Time is spent by our vain Janglings, both in Judicatories and elsewhere? 11. Have we not much more laudable Work to be employed in, both in our private Retirements, and in our publick Appearances, viz. instructing the Ignorant, reclaiming the Profane, awaking the Secure, convincing Hypocrites and Self-deceivers, beating them out of their Refuge of Lies, stopping the Mouths of Gainsayers and Enemies to Religion, strengthening the weak Hands, binding up the feeble Knees, comforting the Afflicted, solving their Doubts, answering their Scruples, bringing back the lost Sheep, &c. 12. How thankful would our persecuted Brethren in *France*, *Germany*, *Lithuania*, *Poland*, &c. be for the happy Circumstances that we are in? 13. How peaceably and affectionately the primitive Churches lived together, and held Communion with one another for a considerable Time, notwithstanding they had different Forms, Modes, and Ceremonies. 14. How at length their unseasonable Debates and Contentions made Way for the Advancement of *Antichrist*, and for the spreading of *Mahometanism*, which made sad Havock among the *Asian* and *African* Churches, who ly in Desolation to this Day? 15. How it was an old Observe, That when the Church was free

of Persecution from without, her Members have raised Persecution against one another, by their unnatural and unseasonable Heats and Divisions; and more particularly, when the Church enjoyed a long Peace from the Death of the Emperor *Valerian*, Anno 260, till the Persecution under the Emperor *Dioclesian*, Anno 303, being just 43 Years, (the same Space of peaceable Time that we have enjoyed since the happy Revolution.) For in this Interval, *Eusebius* in his History, *Lib. 8. Cap. 1.* tells, *That the Emperors did much favour the Christians, not only by granting them Liberty for the publick Exercise of their Religion, but also by making some of them Chamberlains and Governors of Provinces; and then nothing reigned among Christians but Strife and Contention, Pride and Ambition, every one envying and backbiting another; the Pastors strove among themselves, proudly assuming high Titles, and affecting a great Following, &c.*

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

16. How destructive Divisions have been to our own Church, in the Days of King *Charles the First and Second*? 17. What Uneasiness some factious Spirits have occasioned to the Lovers of our Zion, and the Judicatories of the Church, viz. *Masters Houston, Hepburn, M' Millan, Gilchrist and Adamson*? And now, when these Divisions

are happily dwindled almost quite away, since their Leaders were taken off the Stage, except one, will you raise a new Flame, or throw in new Faggots to make the Fire burn afresh, and so afford new Matter of Laughter and Diversion to idle Spectators in our Assemblies, Commissions, Synods, and Presbyteries? 18. How undecent and unnatural it is for Ministers of the Gospel, who are Ambassadors of Peace, who preach the Gospel of Peace, under Christ the Prince of Peace, to be Sowers and Fomenters of Division and Contention among Brethren? 19. How necessary it is to have Zeal tempered with Knowledge, Prudence, and Moderation? And what horrid Mischief has been occasioned to the Church by unwary fiery Zeal? 20. How such Management opens the Door to *Enthusiasts, Seekers, Vanists, Familists, Fifth Monarchy Men*, and other Sectaries in *England*; and what Mischief was done by the furious Zeal of the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, when the poor People were excited to rise up in Arms against their Superiors, Lords, Magistrates, Heritors, &c. 21. How these Divisions and Animosities divert People from the necessary Employments of Life, both for their Souls, and Bodies, and Families? 22. How such Management may provoke the Government, who, when they find their Clemency abused, may lay heavier Burdens on our Shoulders, and wreath the Yoke faster about our Necks. How often have discontented

tented People, by seeking to redress petty
 Grievances, exposed themselves to far great-
 er? 23. How such Divisions may tempt
 People to despise all Religion, and make
 them think there is no Reality in it; and
 what Scruples it fills the Heads of some of
 them with, making them miserably uncertain
 what Hand to turn them to, and what Party
 to join with? 24. How unreasonable it is,
 when a City is on Fire, or a House is burn-
 ing, or a Ship sinking, to see the People
 jangling and contending among themselves,
 when they should rather call all Hands to
 Work to quench the Fire, and stop the Leak,
 that may endanger the Ruin and Destruction
 of the whole Crew? Shall we, by such Ma-
 nagement, occasion the Songs of our Temple
 to be turned into Howling and Lamentation,
 and cause the Gates of *Zion* to mourn, because
 there are none to go up to the solemn Feasts?
 Shall the beautiful and glorious House, where
 our Fathers praised and glorified God, be laid
 in Ashes? Or shall we pull it down with
 our own Hands, and leave our common Ene-
 mies nothing to do but to laugh at our Folly
 and Madness? And therefore let us be wise
 in Time, and take care to heal the Wounds
 of our dear Mother Church; and do not
 blame the Endeavours of any of her dutiful
 Sons, who would gladly wipe off her Re-
 proach, when they see her so openly defam-
 ed, and such Calumnies advanced against her.
 Why should not her Vindication be as pub-
 lick

lick as her Defamation? What has our dear Mother done? *Is the faithful City become an Harlot? Has she turned aside to worship strange Gods, that our Fathers knew not, as the Children of Israel and Judah did of old? Has Profaneness gone forth into the whole Land, by the corrupt Doctrine, and wicked Example of her Priests and Prophets? as Jeremiah complained in his Day, Jer. xxiii.* There is indeed too much Profaneness in the Land; but can you lay this to the Door of our Seers? Don't they lament it? Don't they strive what in them lies to prevent it? And don't they faithfully warn People against it by sound Doctrine, serious Exhortations, and pious Examples? It is our Duty to be valiant for the Truth, and in case of Necessity, to plead with our Mother; but when she has been doing nothing, but what in her present Circumstances she judges best for the Good of her Children. Why should you not put a more favourable Construction upon her Actions? 25. It is very proper that all of us should be frequently considering our latter End, and the strict Trial we are to undergo before the Judge of the Quick and the Dead. One main Thing that procured the Ruin of *Jerusalem* by the *Babylonish* Captivity was, That she considered not her last End, and therefore came down suddenly. This may stir us up to lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us; and which is too incident to

Clergy.

Clergymen, viz. *Pride*, by which cometh Contention, that we may run out the Race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Deut. xxxii. 29. Lam. i. 9. Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Hi morus animorum atque hac certamina tanta, pulveris exigui jactu composita quiescant.*

There is one Thing that you complain of in your Sermon, Page That there was a Petition given in to the last Assembly, subscribed by a great many Hands both Ministers and others, but that it was not taken Notice of, and no Answer given to it. In Answer to which, I must acquaint you, that there was a Committee appointed long ago by the Commission of the General Assembly to meet at *Sanguibar*, in *February 1703*, as I remember, to commune and reason with Mr. *Hepburn* and his Party, anent their withdrawing from the Communion of this Church. They produced a Paper, containing a great Number of Grievances, which were fully reasoned upon for the Space of eight or ten Days; many of them of the same Nature with these in the Paper which you mention. And it was found, 1. That some of these Things were no Grievances. 2. Others of them were about Matters that happened many Years ago, such as the publick Resolutions, *Anno 1648*, the several Indulgences granted in the Days of King *Charles the Second* to Presbyterians, and about the Tolleration granted by King *James the Seventh*; anent which, it
was

was thought altogether unreasonable to bring these Things into Debate now, when the Persons concerned in them are almost wholly off the Stage. 3. That some of these Grievances were such as the Church had no Hand in, and could not possibly redress. The Result of which Conference was, That the People owned, that they had received a great deal of Satisfaction, as being informed in several Things about which they were in the Dark before. And now, what Necessity is there for insisting on these Things which cannot be helped, and for venting your passionate Invektives against the Judicatories of the Church, and loading them with Calumny and Detraction? What is this good for? Will this mend the Matter? Does it serve for any good Purpose but to embitter People's Minds, and to alienate their Affections from their own Ministers in particular, and from our whole Church Constitution in general, and to sow the Seeds of a Paper War, and make Work for Printers and Booksellers? Does it tend any Thing in the least to edify the Body of Christ, for which it pleased the Lord to give some Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors, and Teachers, &c.

N. B. Many of the Brethren who were present at the Management of the said Conference appointed by the Commission, are still alive, viz. Messieurs Thomas Linning, James Hog, Allan Logan, John Brand,

Brand, William M'George, and John Brown. The Register of their whole Proceedings is amongst the Assembly Records, in the Hands of the Clerks. There are several other Ministers Members of the Synod of *Dumfries* still living, who were Witnesses to the said Conference.

This I thought not amiss to inform you and others of, that so it may appear that our Church Judicatories have been at some Pains to hear the Complaints, and answer the Difficulties that some scrupulous People have been perplexed with, and so to contribute to the redressing their Grievances, as far as lay within the Compass of their Power.

It hath been generally own'd, that when a Minister is called to a Parish, the smaller Number of Voters should comply and submit to the Judgment of the greater Number, and consequently are not to insist upon their natural Right of calling a Minister to their own Taste and Liking. Now, suppose a Parish consisting of 3000 People, 2000 of them are content to accept of the Candidate whom the Patron presents, the other remaining Thousand have as good a Right to call another to their liking, and I know nothing to binder them, if they be willing to contribute to his Maintenance according to the foregoing Scheme; but upon sundry prudential Considerations they are content to pass from

from their natural indefeasible Right, because they foresee a Number of Difficulties that ly in their Way of making use of that Right: Such as, 1. They are not very likely to agree in centering upon a fit Person. 2. In determining and collecting what *Quota* every one should advance for his Maintenance. 3. Many are not able to contribute any Thing, others perhaps are not willing; some of these who are willing to contribute may afterwards draw back, either because they are unwilling to ly under that Burden, or because they take up a Grudge and Prejudice at the Minister whom they have called: For we frequently see, that ticklish People are ready enough to cast at a Minister upon very frivolous Grounds. 4. Several of these Contributors may be afterwards obliged to leave that Part of the Country, and will consequently withdraw their Contribution. 5. Tho' they should chearfully contribute all their own Time, yet they cannot oblige their Successors either to their Heritage or Farms; and that because these Successors are willing chearfully to submit to the Ministry of him who is settled upon the Patron's Presentation, and the People's Call. 6. Possibly the Man whom they design to call will not be so acceptable to the Presbytery. 7. It is like it will be found, that there are but few Ministers or Probationers who will be willing to be settled upon such a precarious Fund, which is so likely in a short Time to dwindle away into

into little or nothing. Upon all which Accounts it may be reckoned most advisable, that People in that Case should not insist upon that which they reckon their natural and unalienable Right, and that they ought rather cordially join with their other Neighbours in the Parish, in submitting to the Ministry of him who is settled according to Law, both of Church and State.

Now, if in this Case a Thousand People be content to pass from their Right, why may not a much smaller Number of People likewise pass from their Right in another Case? *viz.* supposing a Parish, consisting of Three Hundred People, and there are sundry Parishes in *Scotland* that do not contain so many as Three Hundred; but *esto* there be so many as Three Hundred, there are no more but One Hundred that concur with the Patron's Presentation, and consequently there is Two Hundred that have a great Inclination towards another: Now, why may not these Two Hundred comply and join with their Neighbours, as the Thousand did in the former Case? If to this you object, That the Case is not alike, because in the former Instance it was carried by a Plurality; but in this Case, the Plurality is against the Presentee. For Answer, Grant it be so; yet their Minority being a Thousand, is Five Times as great as your Majority, which are but Two Hundred: And if they were so humble and modest, peaceable and pliable, as to comply

with the Call of Providence, why may not you, who are a far smaller Number, show the like Christian and peaceable Disposition; especially considering, that the Difficulties mentioned in the former Case will be far stronger than yours? To what Purpose then is it for People to complain so much of Church Judicatories, in their acting as Providence directs them? And why may not Ministers, who should know and understand these Things better than the common People, set them right, and show them their Duty in the present Circumstances, and tell them, That they have great Reason to be thankful, that they are not in the Circumstances of the persecuted Protestants in *France, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Piedmont, &c.* where; if a Protestant Minister be found, he is presently apprehended and put to Death. And that they are in more desirable Circumstances than the Dissenters in *England and Ireland*, who indeed have Liberty to call what Ministers they please; but then they must maintain them. This Duty of Thankfulness to God is incumbent upon all, but especially upon the poorer Sort of People, who have Difficulty enough to maintain themselves and Families, without being burdened with the Maintenance of Ministers. There is but One of Three Things that People must necessarily choose in this Case, *viz.* Either to accept of the Minister presented by the Patron, called by a Part of the Parish, and ordained

ordained by the Presbytery; or to maintain a Minister of their own. Or, 3. To want a Minister altogether. And which of these Three is most to be chosen, let any Man of common Sense, not blinded with Prejudices, or hurried away by popular Clamour, consider and judge: And perhaps, if People had their Will, they would not make so good a Choice of a Minister for themselves, as is made by the Patron and Presbytery. It is very certain that People, for Conveniency of Government, and for the Protection they have by the established Laws, must necessarily pass from many Things within the Compass of their natural Liberty and Right. By an established Government, People are protected from the Insolencies and Injuries they might suffer from Thieves, Robbers, bad Neighbours, Vagrants, Oppressors, Extortioners, Usurers, &c. but in Time of Anarchy and Confusion, they have nothing that they can call their own; and therefore the Advantage of this is much greater, and more to be considered, than any little Inconveniency they can suffer, by a Restriction of their Liberty in some Things that may well be dispensed with. You may see what horrible Mischiefs happened when there was no King in *Israel*, Judges

The Method that some People prefer is the direct Way to unhinge all Government, and to sap the Foundation of our excellent Church Constitution. It would also be remembered, that in this Case of calling Ministers,

nisters, People have more Liberty than others enjoy in their civil Concerns, v. g. in choosing Magistrates of Burghs and Members of Parliament it is certain, that the Plurality of Voters must always carry it; which is clear, both from the Laws of the Land, and the Nature of the Thing itself: For if it should be otherwise, there would be no avoiding of the outmost Confusion and Disorder. The Minor Part of a Town Council have no Liberty to choose another Set of Magistrates than what is agreed to by the greater Part, and likewise in the choosing of Parliament Men, where all Freeholders have an equal Liberty to choose who shall represent them; and when one is chosen by the Plurality, the lesser Part must not pretend to make Choice of another: And if there be any Controversy with respect of Right, to vote, it must be decided by the Parliament itself. But in the choosing of a Minister it is quite otherwise; for if the lesser Part of a Parish be not content with him who is chosen by the Greater, I know nothing to hinder them to choose another for themselves if they have a mind, and providing they can get over the Difficulties above-mentioned. And this is agreeable to the Sentiments and Opinion of many learned and judicious Ministers in *England*, in the Case of a Patron's presenting one who is not acceptable to the People: For which you may see the first Volume of *Mr. Baxter's Life*, abridged by *Dr. Calamy*, Page 271. where a great

great deal is said for the People's Right of choosing their own Ministers. And this is the Remedy proposed, when they are not satisfied with the Presentee *.

Another

* They could not see how the Presentation of a Patron and the Institution of a Bishop, could make it the absolute Duty of all in a Parish, presently to acquiesce in a Minister's Conduct in Holy Things. This may indeed legally entitle him to the *Tithe* and *Maintenance*, but cannot make him a Pastor to any one without his Consent. Parish Order they thought had its Advantages, and was to be preferr'd, when more weighty Reasons did not offer. But they could not see any Thing in it of an absolute Necessity. Neither could they reconcile the Supposition of such a Necessity; (tho' settled by the Law of the Land) with the inviolable Rights of human Nature: which leave a Man as much at his Liberty to choose a Pastor for his Soul, as a Physician for his Body, or a Lawyer for his Estate. And therefore as they thought it would be hard for the Magistrate to say, you shall have this Physician or none, when perhaps another may better hit their particular Constitution: Or you shall have this Lawyer or none, when it may be they know another who was much fitter to have the Management of their Concerns: So did they also reckon it a straining the Point too high, for the Civil Magistrate, (and much more the Bishop) to say, you shall have this Man or none for your Pastor, &c. This Principle only tending to that necessary Liberty which is a Matter of natural Right, infringes not the Right of *Patronage*, which duly bounded, must be owned to have its Conveniencies too. For as Ministers or Bishops may judge who is fit to be by them ordain'd and let into the Ministry, so may Magistrates and Patrons judge and choose who of these Ministers shall have the publick Places, Maintenance and Countenance, and yet People still keep their Right of choosing who shall be their Pastors. If the Patron offers an unfit Man, and the People refuse him, he may offer others. If they continue to disagree, the Matter is easily accommodated, by letting the Patron choose who shall have the Place and Tithes, and the People who shall be their Pastor. If they go to another Parish, the Inconvenience is not great. If a Number of them join together in choosing a Pastor, living peaceably and quietly, there is no Harm in it. The Patron has his Right in presenting the Person that has the publick

Manner

Another Thing to be taken notice of is with respect to a Candidate his accepting of a Presentation, and his being willing to undertake the Charge of a People by the Direction, and under the Inspection of the Presbytery; notwithstanding there may be a considerable Part of that Parish that are more inclined to another. It hath been alledged, not only by ordinary People, but even by some Ministers, That it would be better for such young Men to refuse a Presentation, and reject such a lame Call, and cast themselves upon Divine Providence for their Encouragement and Through-bearing in the World; and that it might be expedient for the General Assembly to make an Act to that purpose, prohibiting all Probationers to accept of a Presentation. But I humbly crave leave to differ from these Men's Opinion, and that for the Reasons following. 1. Because this will seem to be a clashing and interfering with the State and Civil Government; which by no Means is adviseable to do, unless it be in Cases where Conscience is concerned; and then indeed it is the Duty of every Christian

Maintenance. The Parish Minister has his Right; for he hath what publick Maintenance is legally fix'd to the Living; which is as much as the Bishop's Institution, and Patron's Presentation could entitle him to. And at the same Time also the People have their Right, which is paying the Tythe legally due to the Parish Minister, to choose whom they will for their Pastor, without injuring Bishop, Patron, Parish Minister, or any one else.

to say with the Apostle, *Whether it be better to obey God or Man, judge ye, Acts iv. 19.* v. 29. 2. It would be too great an Encroachment on the Liberties of Mankind, which are not to be restricted but in Cases of Necessity; *Quod tibi fieri non vis alteri ne feceris.* 3. I am of the Mind, that a Probationer may, with a safe Conscience, accept of a Presentation when a Part of the People concur, altho' a greater Part be against it; and that because, 1. He sees the Patron is positive, and will not change his Man, who may be judged by the Presbytery to be sufficiently qualified for the Charge; and if this Prefecture be rejected, the Parish may be kept vacant. 2. He resolves, by the Grace of God, to do what Service he can for the Good of those People's Souls who called him; and as for those who do not join with those that called him, he hopes, by a wise and Christian Conduct, either to gain them, or live in Friendship with them, and with the other Minister too, if they shall think fit to call one. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth.* 3. He does not rob that People of their Liberty, which is left still intire to them to call another or not, as they find convenient. 4. He does not obtrude himself on them to be their

P

Minister

Minister whether they will or not; for if they do not think fit to own him as their Minister, he is the less concerned to own them as a Part of his Flock: Only, because they live within that District or Parish, he reckons himself obliged to do them what Service he is capable of, either by visiting them when sick, or helping them in Distress, or baptizing their Children, when duly called thereunto. And as to the Matter of Scandals, if any should arise among them, he is to refer that to the Presbytery, and act according to their Advice. The Relation betwixt a Minister and People is oft-times compared to the Relation betwixt a Husband and Wife, where the Consent of both Parties is necessarily requisite; tho' I think the Comparison is not very proper, because the Church is espoused only to *Jesus Christ*, the Royal Bridegroom. *Isa. liv. 5. Thy Maker is thine Husband, and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel.* The best of Ministers are but Servants or Friends of the Bridegroom. 5. Why should a Candidate be idle, and hide his Talent in a Napkin, (which he has been at pains to improve by long Attendance at Schools and Colleges.) when he has Opportunity, to occupy till Christ come. And tho' in Providence he has not Occasion to exercise it to a greater, why may he not do it to a smaller Number of People, especially when he has good Ground to expect that the Number will be greater? When People come to themselves, and take Time to digest Matters

Matters aright, and weigh all Things in the Ballance of the Sanctuary and of sound Reason; and this he needs not despair of obtaining, if he be one that fears God, and a sincere Lover of Christ, and desires to promote the Salvation of Souls; and if he be not such an one, he is not worthy to be a Minister, tho' the Call of the Parish were never so full and unanimous. And who can see into the Heart? This is God's Prerogative, and I suppose, that neither Ministers nor People will be so presumptuous as to usurp it. It is but a very low Motive, and a mean Thing for a Man of Sense, to take on the Ministry only for a Livelyhood; when there are so many other Ways not only to get Bread, but to attain unto great Things in the World; as many have done, who have acquired great Stocks, some by going to Sea, some by Merchandizing, some by the Law, and some by the Military, who have risen from small Things to great Fortunes, far greater than any Minister in Scotland can pretend to.

I conclude with the Words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, 1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Things, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.* And 2 Cor. xiii. 10. *Finally, Brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and of Peace shall be with you.*

F I N I S.

[illegible]

And shall be with you
in Peace; and the God of Love and of
good Comfort, be of one Mind,
on this, finally, Brethren, farewell;
And stand, and in the same Judgment. And
that we be perfectly joined together in the
Love, there be no Division among you;
I trust, that we all speak the same thing,
Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Je-
sus Christ, Amen. Now I bid you
conclude with the Words of the Apostle

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